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Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): The current political landscape is not so encouraging as to allow us to expect significant advances in disarmament. Perhaps that has always been the case, otherwise we would not have spent more than a century discussing this issue. The international community is now facing serious threats to its security and needs to provide serious answers. Such threats, be they of a terrorist, technological, nuclear, bacteriological or chemical nature, put the existing multilateral structure to the test. We must strengthen that structure rather than simply being passive observers, because by using the excuse that no disarmament instrument is yet universal, that the level of implementation is still unsatisfactory or that under current conditions some of those instruments have become irrelevant, we are becoming mere observers of a weakening of the multilateral structures that we ourselves created.

Uruguay believes that in circumstances such as these, when dangerous unilateralist trends are appearing, it is more than ever necessary to strengthen the multilateral system. At a time when the entry into force of the main instruments is not yet in sight, when negotiations on disarmament remain at a stand-still, and when conventions have not yet become universal, that is when we most need to demonstrate a determination to protect multilateral structures.

Nuclear, biological, chemical, bacteriological, toxin and conventional weapons, including small arms and light weapons, all carry the potential for massive destruction, some of them by their very nature and others because of the quantities in which they proliferate illicitly. We define, catalogue, account for and register them with relative success. However, we continue to fail in our main objective, which is to eliminate them altogether or to limit them.

In recent decades we have established a system designed to regulate arms control and disarmament. While it is insufficient, and while it has been weakened by the deterioration in the international situation, we believe, nevertheless, that the integrity and authority of the system must be preserved, improved and expanded. To that end, and subscribing to what was stated by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Rio Group and without prejudice to statements on specific issues that will be made in due course by the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), Uruguay wishes to stress the following.

First, we believe that maintaining and enhancing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) continues to be the cornerstone of the denuclearization of our planet. Hence, it is necessary to stress the universalization of the NPT on the one hand and strict compliance with its regulations on the other. We are particularly pleased by the announcement made by Cuba regarding its accession to that Treaty and to

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the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco). We would also like to call for the full implementation of the 13 nuclear disarmament measures that arose from the NPT Review Conference in 2000, since which time no substantive progress has been recorded.

Second, Uruguay is concerned by the difficulties regarding the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Although we trust that observance of the moratorium on testing will help, we believe that the effective entry into force of the Treaty should not be delayed.

Third, it is disappointing to see the stalemate — that has already existed for more than six years — in which the Conference on Disarmament (CD) finds itself, and the continued failure to initiate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Such a treaty would be a meaningful step towards non-proliferation and would also contribute directly to the prevention of nuclear terrorism.

Fourth, the serious consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons speaks for itself when observed in terms of the annual number of victims resulting from it: some 500,000. We reaffirm the importance of the Programme of Action adopted last year and hope that the international community will provide the necessary support for United Nations weapons-tracing efforts with a view to evaluating the feasibility of developing an instrument to prevent illicit trafficking.

Fifth, we support the universalization of a draft international code of conduct against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and the convening of an international conference for its adoption. Uruguay believes that the proliferation of such weapons has become an increasingly serious threat.

Sixth, Uruguay reiterates the need to continue working to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and the need to move forward on the draft protocol to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). In that regard, we believe it is necessary to develop a broad-based strategy on this Convention. We regret that there has been no agreement on strengthening it.

Seventh, we believe that the Register of Conventional Arms, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, has proved to be an important element in the promotion of transparency in armaments, and we call for continued efforts to make it universal.

Finally, Uruguay hopes that the progress made through the Ottawa Convention will find an increasingly strong echo in the international community.

Uruguay, a member of the zone of peace established by MERCOSUR, a party to the Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and a party to the NPT, once again reiterates the importance it attaches to the issues that the Committee will be debating in the coming weeks. We stated at the beginning of this statement that existing threats are serious and therefore demand serious responses. Uruguay commits its political will to helping in this task.

My delegation is also extremely pleased, Sir, to work under your stewardship.

Mr. Zarif (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and to express the confidence that with your diplomatic skill and experience the Committee will conclude its work at this important juncture with success. I seize this opportunity also to express my special thanks to Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his leadership and his dedication to promoting the cause of disarmament.

The current international situation is characterized by a reinvigorated global effort to review existing security doctrines in search of a new foundation for fostering peace and security. The prevalent international security paradigm has in fact proven incapable of providing a comprehensive understanding of the new developments in international affairs, much less of articulating appropriate responses to them. It is self-evident that security has become a much more complex and multifaceted issue. The traditional zero-sum approach to security, which ultimately prescribes the enhancement of one security at the expense of others, seems to be a concept of the past. In a globalized and interconnected world of

common threats and common vulnerabilities, security can no longer be attained without considering the interests of all, and without cooperation among all, based on the principle of the equal right of all to peace and security.

The new threats to national, regional and even international security emanating from non-State actors have shattered traditional security perceptions and calculations. Yet the response — in terms of exacerbated recourse to unilateralism, a greater reliance on military hardware, the emergence of national security strategies founded on a new doctrine of pre-emption, and an unprecedented new nuclear posture — has further aggravated the situation. The emergence of a new phase in the international arena in fact requires a different perspective on world affairs.

September 11 illustrated the imperative of revising existing security doctrines, based on the acquisition of huge arsenals of weaponry, including nuclear weapons, as claimed means of maintaining peace and stability. Weapons of mass destruction, once envisaged as guaranteeing the security of their possessors, are today more than ever a source of real concern and are dangerous tools in the hands of irresponsible entities. The nuclear-weapon States therefore have a moral and legal duty and obligation to pursue the total elimination of their stockpiles in order to open the way to a comprehensive global ban.

Today, nuclear weapons serve no purpose other than to antagonize and are in fact a persistent menace to international peace and security. Nuclear weapons continue to inhibit the genuine confidence that is so essential to reforming international relations and enhancing cooperation. The threats of nuclear arms will thus not be removed until and unless such weapons are eradicated and a nuclear-weapon-free world is established.

That is not just an ideal or utopian vision of our future; it is a serious demand of the world community, supported by sound political and legal assertions. The nuclear-weapon States are required and committed by obligations to pursue systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally with the ultimate goal of their elimination. In this context the preservation of nuclear weaponry for future use not only questions the credibility of bilateral arms control efforts but ignites more dangers for security through their possible submission to accidents, misuse and terrorist attacks.

While complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament is our collective goal and commitment, the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be accorded high priority on the international agenda. It is a source of grave concern that the emergence of new doctrines based on pre-emption and enlarging the scope of the use of nuclear weapons, as defined in the Nuclear Posture Review, undermines the very foundations of the non-proliferation regime, with grave consequences for both the regional and the international security environment.

On the positive side I congratulate the Government of Cuba on its decision to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We sincerely hope that this initiative will serve as a further step towards the universality of the Treaty. I should also like to welcome the realization of a new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. Nuclear-weapon-free zones are an essential instrument to consolidate nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Yet, impediments towards the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have aggravated tension in the region. The States in the region have continually expressed their serious concern over the well-documented Israeli pursuit and acquisition of a wide range of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. It is indeed ironic that a regime that has posed the gravest danger to regional and international peace and security for decades has rejected and violated every single resolution of the Security Council and of the General Assembly, and has flouted all international regimes on weapons of mass destruction, has received not only the acquiescence of, but also material support for its weapons of mass destruction programme from, the very State that has made the levelling of baseless allegations against others a priority of its global policy. Even more ironic is the fact that Israel itself has been an active source of misinformation and propaganda about others. It is thus absolutely essential for the international community actively to pursue the implementation of a 30-year-old decision of the General Assembly on the establishment of a zone free from weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

Individual and collective efforts by nuclear-weapon States to reduce their arsenals with a view to

the total elimination of nuclear weapons should be complemented by a revitalization of nuclear disarmament negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. Unfortunately, disarmament negotiations have faced severe setbacks, which in some important areas have undermined the decade-long endeavours of the international community to ban weapons of mass destruction.

Breaking the impasse in the negotiations on a protocol strengthening the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, which was blocked at the very final stage of conclusion and adoption, awaits good will and practical initiatives. The situation is more difficult to justify in an era that is overwhelmed by the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

The multilateral approach to international peace and security is the only viable option in the new international environment. The General Assembly has been identified with the strong and unanimous support of the international community for such a multilateral approach. We hope that this sentiment can be faithfully translated into proper, practical measures in the interest of revitalizing multilateral diplomacy. Last year the First Committee considered the matter and adopted a resolution in this regard. This year, with the expression of such an unprecedented commitment of States to the pivotal principle of multilateralism, a more comprehensive resolution is reasonably expected. Collective efforts are under way to work out a draft for consideration on the issue of the promotion of multilateralism in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation in the First Committee this year. I hope that this draft will create a new momentum for promoting multilateralism as the sole vehicle for the maintenance and strengthening of peace and security.

The issue of missiles has rightly attracted attention in the United Nations. A General Assembly resolution on missiles led to the establishment of a Panel of Governmental Experts to address the issue in all its aspects. We are happy that this Panel succeeded in preparing the first-ever United Nations report on this complex issue (A/57/229). I congratulate the Chairman and members of the Panel on their tireless efforts and on their commitment to conclude a substantive review on different aspects of missiles. The Chairman of the Panel, Ambassador Guerreiro of Brazil, had an important role in achieving consensus within the Panel, and I seize this opportunity to express my special thanks for his dedication and excellent leadership.

The report primarily conducted an overview of the evolution of missiles production and staged development and their existing capabilities. In this framework the report has enumerated missile characteristics within the technical and strategic purview which have made missiles a suitable choice for States in the military and civilian fields. Furthermore, the report outlined driving factors in the acquisition and development of missiles. Most importantly, it addressed issues related to various aspects of the relationship of missiles to weapons of mass destruction, conventional capabilities, technology transfer, military doctrines and confidence-building measures.

The report, however general, provides a sound basis for further work and prepares the ground for more detailed and action-oriented recommendations.

The tenth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms provides a useful opportunity to substantively review the overall operation of the Register and its effectiveness, as well as possible measures to strengthen this initiative.

One of the basic issues in the operating process of the Register is the misgivings of States with regard to full participation in the process. The founding fathers of the Register established through this framework a basis for the exchange of information on armaments as a contribution to openness and confidence in the military sphere. That notion is clearly underlined even in the title of the resolution, that is, "Transparency in armaments". Unfortunately, the implementation of the resolution and the operation of the Register have been narrowly interpreted by some, against the letter and spirit of the original resolution, as being limited to the seven categories of conventional arms, and all efforts to expand the scope of the Register into a broader context of information exchange, including on weapons of mass destruction, have faced opposition and rejection.

That is a sad experience which should be rectified in order to increase the efficiency and plausibility of the whole process. A decision to share information about nuclear arsenals, fissile materials and related technologies could provide an important impetus for the successful operation of the Register.

Macrodisarmament and microdisarmament are today indispensable aspects to achieving security. Less

reliance on weapons, particularly weapons of mass destruction, should be recognized as a key common denominator to advance and promote peace and security. The world today is smaller than ever and its security ever more indivisible. We hope that we can unite to prevent catastrophes arising from our unpreparedness to face the new security challenges to our common future.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): First may I also subscribe to the congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the high office of chairman of the First Committee and express confidence that under your skilful leadership substantive progress will be made in dealing with the important issues on the Committee's agenda. I also extend my felicitations to other members of the Bureau.

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary for the excellent way in which he guided the work of the Committee during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, and also to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his tireless work on disarmament and international security issues and for his comprehensive statement before the Committee.

The terrorist acts in the United States a year ago demonstrated the fragility of the world we live in and the importance for all States to join their efforts to ensure security and stability. These barbaric acts should lead us to renew our adherence to the body of disarmament and arms control agreements. We believe that the international nature of contemporary threats and challenges requires multilateral efforts for their prevention.

In this regard I should like to refer to the statement by the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, in which he listed positive and negative aspects in the field of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation. I am pleased to state that Kazakhstan is involved in most of the positive events. Among them is the agreement reached recently by the expert group in Samarkand on the text of a treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, and the commitment to sign the treaty this year in Semipalatinsk. Kazakhstan, whose people have experienced the negative power of nuclear weapons, is convinced that this is an important event, not only for Central Asian countries but also for the United Nations, which has been involved in the process since 1997.

We believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones throughout the world is compatible with the integrity and sustainability of the international non-proliferation regime. That is why Kazakhstan supports the consolidation of the status of Mongolia as a nuclear-weapon-free State, welcomes the recent announcement by the Government of Cuba on the ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and Brazil's initiative to join the nuclear-weapon-free zone in the southern hemisphere in order to create a southern hemisphere free from nuclear weapons.

Kazakhstan appreciates the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, which is the effective instrument in helping to create an atmosphere of cooperation and disarmament in the region. The Centre has been rendering its essential assistance to the five Central Asian States in their work on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

This year my country ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The total number of signatories has now reached 166, 94 of which have ratified the Treaty. It is a good sign of the support for this Treaty by the international community. Kazakhstan continues to make practical contributions to efforts to enhance the effectiveness of the monitoring of compliance with the CTBT. As one of the few States in the world that voluntarily relinquished their nuclear heritage, it believes that a prerequisite for an atmosphere of trust in modern international relations is the early entry into force of the CTBT. The maintenance and strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is an essential process in the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world. Having welcomed Cuba's decision to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), we call on those other States still outside the Treaty to join without delay.

I will not go further into details of my country's input in the disarmament and non-proliferation areas. Clear evidence of this contribution is the full membership of Kazakhstan in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and other well-recognized international organizations. This year, we also joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which gives us another opportunity to participate in preventing the

establishment of new types of nuclear weapons and strengthening the non-proliferation regime.

The latest events show us not only the importance of promoting the nuclear non-proliferation regime but also the necessity of preventing a destabilizing build-up of conventional weapons in some regions. Transparency in the field of the control and reduction of conventional arms provides a good basis for preventing an excessive concentration of weapons in any State. Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, has provided information on a regular basis since 1992, and considers the Register to be the most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of this important international instrument.

Kazakhstan is also in favour of other transparency measures offered by the United Nations, such as the standardized instrument for reporting military expenditures, and is one of the co-sponsors of the relevant resolution of the First Committee. In this regard, while the Programme of Action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects has not fully met the expectations of all countries, we reiterate our readiness to undertake all bilateral, regional and international cooperative actions to ensure its implementation.

As a contribution to this matter, in May this year the final regional OSCE Conference on the illegal proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Asia was held in Almaty. It was the first effort to identify problems of the illicit trafficking in small arms in Central Asia through an information exchange. The Conference was attended by experts and representatives from the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Finland, Norway, Canada, and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations.

I avail myself of this opportunity also to reiterate the willingness of my country, as was voiced by the Secretary of State and Minister for Foreign Affairs in his statement during the general debate of this fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to host in Kazakhstan in the year 2003 an international conference on this subject under the auspices of the United Nations.

A half year after Kazakhstan joined the United Nations at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly, the President of Kazakhstan, Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, put forward an initiative on convening a conference on interaction and confidence-building measures in Asia aimed at the creation of a security system in Asia. That goal was advanced by the first summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), which convened in June this year in Almaty. For the first time ever, the heads of the major Asian States came together to express their political will and interest in a joint search for ways to strengthen peace and stability in the vast Asian region. The adoption of the final documents, the Almaty Act on the institutionalization of CICA and the Declaration on Eliminating Terrorism and Promoting Dialogue among Civilizations, is extraordinarily important as it represents a valuable attempt to contribute to regional and global security. In this regard we call on all interested States to continue their work to implement confidence-building measures in Asia.

Finally, I should like to support your wish expressed in the opening statement to see in our deliberations a new commitment to rekindle the spirit of multilateralism that is so vitally needed to address global threats. This may be our greatest challenge of all and we must not fail.

Mr. Wisnumurti (Indonesia): Allow me first of all to express my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over the deliberations of the First Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. Let me also avail myself of this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his thoughtful and incisive statement on various disarmament and international security issues.

The First Committee is meeting at a challenging and difficult time. While there have been some positive developments, we are in fact witnessing the weakening of the basic disarmament infrastructure and a crisis in multilateral disarmament endeavours. My delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States that led to the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. As an important milestone in limiting nuclear armaments, it has mandated a reduction of deployed nuclear weapons to between

1700 and 2200 over the next decade and has provided a new foundation for strategic relations between them. It is our expectation that they will continue their efforts towards the elimination of nuclear arsenals.

It is also gratifying to note that total global arms sales are at their lowest since 1997. Many developing countries have curtailed their expenditures on weapons, and the resources can now be utilized for socio-economic development. The number of signatures and ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has continued to increase. Likewise, we note the advances made with regard to the elimination of chemical weapons, along with an increase in the number of ratifications of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Our commendation goes to Cuba for its decision to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and thereby further strengthen the non-proliferation regime. Equally notable is the agreement on the text of a draft treaty to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, demonstrating an irreversible trend towards a nuclear-free world.

However, in the effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons, the picture is hardly encouraging. There is growing concern at the slow pace of progress towards achieving the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. The situation has been further compounded by the updating of strategic doctrines which set out new rationales for the permanent retention of these weapons, a new generation of such weapons and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. My delegation has also noted with regret the unilateral abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), plans for a national missile defence, and the prospects of an arms race in outer space. These negative developments have led to a new, more disturbing strategic context.

Underlying this crisis, there has been no serious implementation of the commitments undertaken to achieve disarmament objectives. Meanwhile, we have witnessed the growing trend towards undermining multilateralism and multilateral legal commitments. Divergent strategic interests have contributed to a grave setback to disarmament efforts, including deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament, which has failed so far to agree on its programme of work. The consequences of failing to address these issues in their broader and deeper dimensions will be dangerous and counterproductive. Our ability and willingness to maintain the current arms control regime will suffer gravely, and the prospect for credible disarmament agreements in the future will be drastically diminished.

Hence, the unequivocal undertaking of the 2000 NPT Review Conference needs to be demonstrated without delay through an accelerated process of negotiations and the full implementation of the 13 practical steps to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. For Indonesia, their implementation constitutes a benchmark to determine progress in fulfilling nuclear disarmament obligations and must be based upon genuine disarmament, which requires codification, transparency, accountability and verification. In particular: the reduction of operational strategic systems, which pose the most imminent danger, will provide hope for progress in reducing, if not eliminating, nuclear dangers; the irreversibility of the dismantling of nuclear weapons should be an integral part of the disarmament process; and diminishing the future role of these weapons in security minimizes the risk of their use. This can be bolstered by unilateral measures which could lead to new frontiers in arms limitation by reinforcing bilateral agreements, reducing arsenals, and cutting non-strategic nuclear weapons and limiting weaponization. This would reflect restraint, enhance confidence and contribute to the objective of achieving the total abolition of nuclear armaments.

The problem of controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction has emerged as being more important today than at any time in the nuclear age. The rising spectre of these weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, being acquired and used by non-State actors is of concern to us all. They pose a particular danger to international stability, which no nation can deal with unilaterally. In this context, the early adoption of an international convention for the suppression of nuclear terrorism, which has been under consideration by the General Assembly, would be an important first step towards eliminating this threat. It should contain provisions to safeguard nuclear materials and to establish international control of all fissile materials that could be used to make new nuclear weapons, and should promote internationally agreed standards for all types of nuclear exports and imports. Such a convention would add significantly to existing legal norms such as the Vienna Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials.

As regards the Bangkok Treaty, States parties meant it to be their contribution to the strengthening of

security and to the maintenance of world peace and stability. As in the case of the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba Treaties, the Bangkok Treaty could become effective only with the participation of all nuclear-weapon States. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been negotiating with them the terms of a Protocol to become an integral part of the Treaty. Some nuclear-weapon States, however, continue to have unresolved concerns. Negotiations are continuing, and it is hoped the nuclear Powers will ratify the Protocol in the foreseeable future so that the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone will become fully operative.

In the first effort by the United Nations to address the question of missiles in all its aspects, the report on a study by the Panel of Governmental Experts (A/57/229) has illuminated our understanding by discussing, inter alia, the existing situation and trends, past precedents, and missiles being the delivery means of choice for weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, and for many conventional weapons, with implications at both regional and global levels. It also acknowledged the right of States to use space technology for peaceful purposes. The report noted the lack of universally accepted norms or instruments to deal specifically with missile-related concerns. That anomaly has been addressed in part by the proposed global control system and the draft international code of conduct, focusing primarily on the key issue of stemming missile proliferation and related technologies. They reflect a response to the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

However, the lacunae in the non-proliferation regimes have made us realize the need to take a collective look at this issue and explore other modalities to combat the danger of missile proliferation. Multilateral initiatives under United Nations auspices for a comprehensive and non-discriminatory legal regime will not only address proliferation concerns and questions relating to dual-use technology, but also adopt a phased approach to reduce and eliminate both offensive and defensive missiles. The international community now has an unprecedented opportunity to seek a responsible outcome by building further on the report of the Panel of Experts.

Of the numerous global problems requiring a multilateral response, few can be as obvious as disarmament. In view of the deadlock that has persisted in our endeavours, we believe that the time has come to convene a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV). It is now nearly a decade and a half since SSOD-III was convened. It is also pertinent to recall that the Disarmament Commission considered this question exhaustively during an unprecedented four consecutive years and identified the essential elements for further elaboration. That reflects the importance that an overwhelming majority of States attach to its convening. My delegation is, therefore, hopeful that SSOD-IV can be convened so that we can build on our past achievements and come to grips with the myriad of issues that have for so long eluded consensus.

My delegation wishes to inform member States that a seminar in Bali will be held in February 2003 to consider the implementation, at the regional level, of the Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Concurrently, that forum will also hold a workshop on transparency in armaments.

Before concluding, my delegation wishes to commend the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its contributions to facilitating the exploration of new vistas, delineating areas for negotiations and agreements, and thereby strengthening the prospects for disarmament. For these reasons, it is essential that the activities of the Centre be continued.

Mr. Fils-Aimé (Haiti) (*spoke in French*): I should like to convey to you, Sir, on behalf of the Haitian delegation, our most earnest congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. You may count on the full support and cooperation of my delegation in carrying out your noble task. I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Mr. André Erdös of Hungary for the outstanding manner in which he led our work at the fifty-sixth session.

General disarmament is the final objective to be achieved in order to have collective security. The maintenance of international peace and security will remain a dream as long as States do not achieve a significant reduction in the number and quality of armaments they have available to them for their internal security. Indeed, by limiting numbers of troops

and reducing armaments the risks of aggression diminish.

From the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, created in 1959, to the Conference on Disarmament, the progress achieved has been slow. Several agreements on arms control and disarmament have not been ratified by States that, however, signed them willingly. The Haitian delegation regrets that the only multilateral negotiating forum for disarmament has not been able at its 2002 session to agree on a work plan pertaining to substantive matters. In the interests of collective peace and security it is essential that we overcome these obstacles, in spite of differences of view.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, my delegation welcomes the signing, on 24 May 2002, by the United States of America and the Russian Federation of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions. This is a positive step in the right direction and we hope that the process of destroying these arms, as planned within the framework of this Treaty, will become verifiable and irreversible, for the new architecture of international peace and security calls for a treaty for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In this connection my delegation welcomes the decision of the Cuban Government to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. By this decision the Cuban authorities are confirming their firm dedication to nuclear disarmament and their faith in multilateralism, which today is in full crisis.

The NPT is a necessary instrument for the campaign of the international community against armaments and in favour of non-proliferation. Indeed, non-proliferation and disarmament are integrally linked. Therefore, the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones plays a crucial role in the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. The Haitian delegation welcomes the establishment of such zones through the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and Bangkok. We would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the efforts made to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The Republic of Haiti, which is a party to the NPT, also signed in Vienna on 10 July 2002 the International Atomic Energy Agency's Additional Protocol on Safeguards. That agreement, as well as the Additional Protocol, will be ratified soon by the Haitian Parliament. Even though Haiti does not have or make use of fissile materials, such as uranium or plutonium, the fact remains that the ratification of these legal instruments will demonstrate to the international community the extent to which the Haitian Government shares its objectives for non-proliferation and disarmament. On behalf of the Haitian Government I should like to thank publicly the Director of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the assistance given to the Republic of Haiti for almost two years now in the civilian use of nuclear energy.

The Haitian delegation joins those which call for a complete ban on nuclear testing. In this connection, we welcome the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by a growing number of States — 94 at present — and especially the impressive system of international monitoring set up in order to detect and deter any nuclear testing. We express the ardent hope that the moratorium on testing will remain, pending the entry into force of this Treaty.

The Republic of Haiti is in favour of eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, be they nuclear, biological or chemical weapons. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, condemned by General Assembly resolution 56/1 and Security Council resolution 1373 (2001), it is more urgent than ever to deal with this issue and recognize the close connection between international terrorism and the illegal movement of these weapons of mass destruction. Having said that, my delegation remains convinced that biological and chemical weapons represent a genuine threat to international peace and security. Enough progress has been achieved in the area of biotechnology and genetics to give us an idea of the danger awaiting humankind if it does not obtain multilateral instruments to struggle against the proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery.

In this regard the Republic of Haiti welcomes the appeal made by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for biological disarmament and encourages the Biological and Toxin Weapons Review Conference to reconcile the interests and differences of view in order to strengthen the Convention. Moreover, we welcome the progress made in order to achieve the elimination of chemical weapons within the framework of the Convention and we can only praise the efforts of the Organization which, since the entry into force of that Convention in 1997, is working actively towards

the implementation of these forecasts. However, like the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), my delegation is still concerned about the quantity of these arms that are stockpiled and the military arsenals and expresses its concern that the Organization was only able to carry out 70 per cent of its programme of inspection last year for lack of funds.

In an introductory statement made on 30 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala — to whom my delegation would like to pay a well-deserved tribute — reminded us that 639 million light weapons remain throughout the world. These weapons, which are cheap and easily transportable, are causing the deaths of 500,000 people a year; controlling their proliferation is becoming increasingly necessary. Indeed, since 1990, small arms and light weapons are the tools that fuel conflicts, threaten civilian populations, and destabilize young economies and democracies. Africa has suffered a great deal from this. It is with satisfaction that my delegation welcomed the July 2001 Conference held here in New York, and the implementation of its Programme of Action can only help to predict, combat and eradicate the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in arms.

With this in view we should encourage the important initiatives adopted at the regional and subregional level in order to combat this devastating scourge, especially the Inter-American Convention of 1997, the Brasilia Declaration of November 2000 and the Common Position formulated by the Ministerial Conference of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in December 2000, to cite only a few.

Military expenditures are now estimated to be more than $850 billion. The policy of nuclear deterrence or of military superiority still remains. These colossal sums are taken from national budgets in the name of national defence, peace and international security. To be viable, all this security should rest on two pillars, namely, the socio-economic progress of peoples and the development of a culture of peace. The latest report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on human development states that the objectives of the millennium could be achieved if official development assistance increased by approximately $50 billion in a sustained manner. Overarming does not foster development, nor does it guarantee international peace and security.

Before concluding, my delegation would be remiss if it did not welcome Switzerland and Timor-Leste, new Members of the Organization. We also wish to avail ourselves of this opportunity to hail the courage of civil society and non-governmental organizations also concerned by the arms race.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): Allow me at the outset to say on behalf of my delegation and myself how very pleased we are to see you, Sir, presiding over the Committee. Your experience in disarmament matters and well-known skills are a good omen for the success of our work. We would also like to praise your predecessor, Ambassador André Erdös, whose work at the helm of the Committee at the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly was unanimously appreciated. Finally, we wish to say how grateful we are to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his introductory statement and technical details.

The end of the cold war might have led us to believe that we were close to a final settlement of the question of disarmament. Regrettably, that is not the case. On the contrary, and paradoxically, the unipolarity that has stemmed from this phenomenon seems to have meant the possibility of a greater striking force, including nuclear force, since the collapse of the Berlin wall. The club of countries possessing nuclear weapons has grown dangerously rather than decreased, so that current realities cannot dispel our fears. Indeed, the hopes that arose from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) have vanished with the unilateral withdrawal of one of the parties.

Mr. Rivas (Colombia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

Burkina Faso would however like to say that it is pleased at the signing between the Russian Federation and the United States on 24 May 2002 of a treaty under which they are contemplating a one-third reduction in their nuclear arsenals by 2012. The process of implementing the START treaty is stuck, as is that of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That is true also of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), despite the decisions adopted at the 2000 Review Conference. As to the Conference on Disarmament (CD), it has been marking time for several years and has still to adopt an agenda that would make it possible for its work to begin again effectively.

With regard to this question, we had earlier expressed regret about the negative influences that limited the scope of the results of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects but we have to work to ensure effective implementation of the actions identified by the Conference. As we can see, the overall situation is not very encouraging. A great deal remains to be done and the United Nations must redouble its efforts. In this regard, like other countries, Burkina Faso has supported the goals of general and complete disarmament under international control. That objective will be pursued on the basis of a well-balanced approach, together with the appropriate measures. However, it is crystal clear that these initiatives for general and complete disarmament cannot be successful unless there is a calm international climate imbued with trust, in other words, an environment that is respectful of the obligations stemming from international agreements and arrangements. This calm, we must stress and deplore, is far from having been achieved in the current international situation, particularly since there are several other aspects of disarmament that have yet to be resolved and are of grave concern.

Thus, when it comes to small arms and light weapons and their proliferation, despite measures adopted by Governments, there is a recurrence of this phenomenon, particularly in Africa, which threatens the very stability of the continent. Among solutions that could be advocated to remedy this negative trend there is the absolute need to strengthen the United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, particularly the Centre in Togo which covers the West African region. We welcome the creation of such centres, the usefulness of which is widely recognized but which unfortunately are having some difficulty in functioning because of a lack of resources. Thus we urge the international community to provide them with the necessities they require.

In conclusion, Burkina Faso will continue at all times to take part in United Nations efforts in the context of measures to resolve the question of disarmament. Internally, already measures have been taken to harmonize our national legislation with those treaties to which Burkina Faso is a party. Burkina Faso remains convinced that only true transparency in the area of armaments and a united and collective effort by the international community will lead to general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation congratulates the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee and expresses its conviction that under his able guidance substantial progress will be achieved in the deliberations on the agenda items before the Committee.

It is the desire of all humankind to make the twenty-first century a century of peace and stability by realizing disarmament. However, the disarmament foundations established as the result of enormous efforts on the part of international society over several decades are being threatened. Theories on nuclear supremacy and a nuclear pre-emptive strike, attempts to build a missile defence system and to deploy nuclear weapons in outer space, and other actions in the pursuit of a global strategy based on strength render the bilateral and multilateral disarmament agreements ineffective and invalid.

The qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and the development of sophisticated weapons are openly conducted; the commitments so far made for the abolition of nuclear weapons serve no purpose at all; and fears are increasing that the arms race of the cold war might be revisited. Fairness is further forced to be silent in international relations. Discussions and debates on disarmament in United Nations forums cannot be said to be fully impartial, objective and substantive, and do not address real threats and challenges to world peace and security. There are more unrealistic requests on sidelined issues. Disarmament deliberations will continue to be unproductive as long as delegations fumble with tiny branches while avoiding the main stems and roots.

In order to achieve lasting world peace and security in the new century, nuclear disarmament should be realized and our planet denuclearized. The major threat and challenge to world peace and security today is power politics, based on the absolute supremacy of nuclear weapons. This is demonstrated by the recent shift from the nuclear deterrence theory to a pre-emptive strike philosophy and the open clamour of nuclear threats. As long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, humankind can never be free from nuclear threats.

The core issue of disarmament is nuclear disarmament, and the disarmament process can properly proceed only when nuclear disarmament is achieved. That includes, inter alia, the prohibition and total elimination of the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this regard my delegation favours the early conclusion of an international agreement which clearly indicates the obligations of all nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States on the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons, and the complete destruction of all nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, precedence should be given to implementing assurances of the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States, and the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons deployed outside the territories of nuclear-weapon States, thus removing the nuclear threat and promoting the nuclear disarmament process.

My delegation is of the view that a future international legal agreement on preventing the deployment of weapons in outer space and the threat or use of force against outer space objects would serve the global goal of preventing the weaponization of outer space. Disarmament cannot be unilateral but should be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and trust among States. Real disarmament can never be expected in an environment characterized by continued hostile relations between States, increased threats to sovereignty, stigmatizing member States as evil and calling for pre-emptive strikes. Furthermore it is not reasonable for any country, deploying abroad huge armed forces and weapons of mass destruction, to insist that other countries reduce their self-defensive forces. My delegation considers it urgent to convene a United Nations conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers and adopting an effective action programme for comprehensive disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament.

The situation on the Korean Peninsula remains a major concern for world peace and security. The Korean goal is to terminate foreign interference and realize the reunification of the country. The great leader of our people, General Kim Jong-il, has opened a new chapter in the history of North-South relations, advocating national independence and great national unity in order to bring an early peace and reunification of the country. He also provides a favourable environment for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula with his energetic external activities. The historic inter-Korean summit meeting that took place in Pyongyang in June 2000, the first of its kind in the history of national division, and the adoption of the North-South Joint Declaration, serve as a turning point in the efforts of the Korean people for the reunification of the country.

The North-South Joint Declaration is a declaration of national independence and peaceful reunification, calling for opposition to foreign interference and achieving reunification by the concerted efforts of the Korean nation. Though there have been temporary obstacles in the implementation of the North-South Joint Declaration, due to external intervention and the lack of a national independent spirit, North-South relations are now taking big steps forward, supported by our magnanimity for country and nation. Substantial cooperation and exchanges are being undertaken in various fields, and recently ground-breaking ceremonies have taken place for reconnecting railways and roads between the North and the South of Korea.

Respected General Kim Jong-il held a meeting with President Putin in the far eastern region of the Russian Federation in August this year; and had talks with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan in Pyongyang on 17 September, signing the Pyongyang Declaration between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan. These meetings constitute a great contribution to world peace and security and to the creation of a new and just world structure. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will discharge in good faith its duty and responsibility to achieve peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, and to ensure peace and stability in North-East Asia and the world, under the wise leadership of respected General Kim Jong-il.

If peace and reunification are to be achieved on the Korean Peninsula, the North and the South of Korea should reject foreign interference and hold to the spirit of national independence. Recourse to foreign forces and complicity with them against fellow countrymen render impossible the development of North-South relations in the interests of the Korean nation and the realization of peace and reunification. In order to do away with a dependence on foreign forces, the withdrawal of foreign troops should be called for. South Korea protects the stationing of foreign forces targeted at fellow countrymen, and does not exercise

any jurisdiction over the crimes committed by foreign soldiers who, as in one case recently, killed two South Korean female students. It is indeed not in a position to speak about issues of peace and security. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea would like to take this opportunity to urge South Korea to abandon its reliance on foreign forces and to adhere to a spirit of national independence. That is essential for promoting peace and reunification in Korea in line with the spirit of the North-South Joint Declaration.

In order to ensure peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and realize reunification, the hostile policy of the United States against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should be abolished. Peace and security in Korea and North-East Asia can be expected when the United States terminates its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, respects our system and sovereignty, and develops relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on the principle of equality and mutual benefit.

If the United States renounces its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and implements in good faith the Agreed Framework for the proper construction of the light water reactors, the issue of safeguards will be resolved accordingly. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea holds to the position of readjusting and developing relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America in the new century. The need to do so stems from the negative policy of the present United States Administration towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea which states that the United States has security concerns with respect to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. If the United States Administration is willing to abandon its hostile policy towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will address, through dialogue, the security issues of concern to the United States. From that standpoint we are following the visit of the special envoy of the United States President who is now in Pyongyang.

Mr. Sharma (Nepal): I wish to congratulate the Chairman on his well-deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and express my delegation's full confidence in his leadership. Warm felicitations are also due to the other members of the Bureau. I also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to his predecessor for the successful conclusion of the fifty-sixth session.

We commend the Secretary-General for his consistent attempts to promote disarmament and peace. Let me also thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive opening remarks earlier in the general debate.

The past year has been a mixed bag of advances and setbacks in the field of disarmament. Progress in reducing the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction has been accompanied by the tremendous refinement of horrible weapons technologies and the undermining of existing international treaties. The balance sheet has, however, tilted more to the negative side, a fact which hardly bodes well for the global community. Efforts, therefore, are critical to quicken the pace of disarmament in order to realize the purpose of the United Nations Charter and the objectives of the Millennium Declaration.

Nepal is a persistent supporter of disarmament as a means of promoting international peace and security, and nuclear disarmament remains at the top of our priorities. World peace must be based on mutual trust and respect, not on the threat of mutual annihilation. We welcome the United States — Russian Federation agreement to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons. At the same time, we believe that the abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has long been a factor of stability, will open the door to a new arms race, which is likely to be much more dangerous than ever before. The ultimate security from nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination. We therefore urge all declared and undeclared nuclear Powers to show commitment and resolve to get rid of their nuclear arsenals within a technically feasible time frame.

Many States have never harboured a nuclear ambition, and many others have shunned that option out of conscience. We applaud Cuba for joining the category of such nations by acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Treaty of Tlatelolco. But some have sought these weapons overtly or covertly, undermining the objective of the NPT and the larger goal of complete nuclear disarmament. This tendency is unlikely to be reversed unless nuclear weapons are delegitimized, and unless

the nuclear Powers make concrete advances towards eradicating these horrendous arms from their arsenals. To cling to such deadly weapons themselves, while asking others to forgo the nuclear weapon option, would be a patent example of the double standard, which nuclear Powers must avoid.

At a time when progress in the actual reduction of nuclear arms has been disheartening, measures to build confidence and to curb the further growth and proliferation of such weapons have stalled or have been disappointingly slow. For example, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty has yet to come into force since it lacks sufficient ratifications. Negotiations on the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty, which should be pursued with a sense of urgency, have not gotten off the ground. Governments on their own and on a regional basis have been attempting to rid their countries and regions of nuclear weapons, which is very encouraging. In this context, my delegation welcomes the endeavour of Central Asian countries to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region.

We also call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards, and on the South Asian rival countries not to rattle their nuclear sabres.

The guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons can be a potent confidence-building measure, both as an interim step and as an incentive for the attainment of total nuclear disarmament, which is our ultimate goal. Other weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical and biological weapons, should have no place in a civilized world. Sadly, the faltering of negotiations on the proposed protocol on the Biological Weapons Convention does not bode well, but we hope the resumed review conference on this Convention will be able to achieve its objective.

The effective enforcement of the various disarmament treaties has always been problematic. In this context we call on Iraq to comply with the relevant United Nations resolutions and allow the inspectors back in. We also call on the global community to respect the United Nations Charter in its actions, while implementing the provisions of international law.

Though meagre in its recommendations, the consensus of governmental experts on the issue of missiles is encouraging, as it will afford a basis on which to establish multilateral norms in this respect. Nepal, opposed as it is to anti-personnel landmines, has actively participated in the evolution of the Convention to control them, and our moral commitment to the Convention remains strong. The text of the instrument is under the active consideration of His Majesty's Government, and when the process is completed, we will be very happy to join the ranks of those nations that have the privilege of becoming parties to this very important global Treaty.

It would be outrageous to cast the dark shadow of a terrible arms race on outer space, the seabed and Antarctica. Nepal opposes any effort to weaponize these very sensitive areas. A victim of Maoist terrorism for half a decade, Nepal has witnessed how terrorists snatch small arms away from civilians and turn them brutally against innocent people. Our commitment to implement the Programme of Action adopted by the 2001 Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, therefore, is full, and our call to strengthen global measures to keep these arms from non-State actors is strong.

While overall progress in disarmament is rather slow, what dismays us most is that the Conference on Disarmament could not even agree on its programme of work over the course of four successive sessions. Moreover, the Disarmament Commission did not meet at its last scheduled session. These are matters of serious disappointment for us. We call on the world community to put these multilateral mechanisms to their best use.

Regional centres for peace and disarmament are an important tool to promote the goals of disarmament and peace. Nepal is grateful to Member States for the honour they have conferred by designating it as host for the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific. I wish to reaffirm the abiding and resolute commitment of His Majesty's Government to transfer the Centre to where it belongs, that is, to Nepal, as soon as possible. For this, His Majesty's Government has already decided to contribute the operational costs of the Centre when it is relocated to Kathmandu. We seek the continued moral and material support of Member States in moving the Centre to Nepal and in further strengthening its activities.

Deadly weapons may bring uneasy stability founded in fear, but they will not ensure durable peace erected on the pillars of mutual trust, understanding and interdependence. All strategic doctrines experimented with so far, from the balance of power to

mutually assured destruction, have failed to offer such peace. Nepal therefore sees no alternative to a culture of peace, where disputes are resolved peacefully before they flare up, and where human dignity is valued. We view disarmament as an integral part of the culture of peace in that resources released from deep cuts in military and arms expenditures could be diverted to development in order to lift billions of people from poverty, illiteracy and disease around the globe. The peace dividend must be a tangible reality, not an abstract notion. What we need for durable peace and security are more bridges between peoples and nations, not more bombs.

The Chairman: That concludes the list of speakers for this morning. I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): In order not to diminish the importance of congratulating the Chairman on his assumption of the chairmanship, official congratulations will come later in the debate from the head of my delegation.

I also wish to thank the Syrian and Iranian representatives who, with their baseless allegations and toxic rhetoric, have afforded me the opportunity to set the record straight.

It is not my intention to refer to the delusional fantasy offered by these delegations in their statements. Our positions on arms control and security issues, as well as our support for the eventual establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, will be described at length in our statement during the general debate of the Committee. Suffice it to say that listening to such allegations against my country from countries that are notorious for their repression and totalitarianism, lacking even the most basic respect for human rights and the rule of law, is offensive in the extreme.

We have heard in the course of this debate several references to a so-called double standard. A clear distinction must be made between a democracy, my country, the only democracy in the Middle East, a country that has fought for its existence from the moment of its establishment, and the countries I have just described. For more than five decades, Israel has dealt with threats from neighbouring countries, some of which have long histories of tyranny, repression and totalitarianism, and lack even the most basic respect for human rights and the rule of law. Nothing prevents these regimes from employing the most brutal methods to maintain their power. Some have even used weapons of mass destruction, not only against their neighbours, but also against their own people. In this regard it is worth mentioning that only yesterday, Iran revealed the true objective of its missile programme, which is aimed at no other State than Israel. That is probably its manifestation of a culture of peace.

In his statement, the Syrian representative has revealed his overriding motivation to try to legitimize terrorism by making a distinction that may justify violence against civilians. This comes to us as no surprise in light of the fact that Syria is listed as a State sponsor of terrorism. That is made even more disturbing by the fact that this country is a member of the Security Council and has even served as its President.

There can be no acceptance for those who seek to justify the deliberate taking of innocent civilian lives, regardless of cause or grievances. Terrorism must be condemned without equivocation and without distinction. If we are to be successful in our campaign to rid the world of this scourge, States must undertake to stop all moral or logistical support for acts of terrorism. But that would be an act of moral and legal principle and an outgrowth of basic respect for humanity and the sanctity of human life. That, I do not expect, will be forthcoming from those delegations, and especially not from Syria.

Mr. Al-Matoq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to congratulate the Chairman on his election to the chairmanship of the Committee. We hope that his work will be crowned with success.

I have a very simple reply to the representative of Nepal, who said that Iraq should comply with Security Council resolutions. I believe that the delegation of Nepal does not have a full picture of the situation, because Iraq is in fact complying with all Security Council resolutions. Iraq has invited the inspectors to come to its territory to see what we are doing with respect to weapons of mass destruction. The position of Iraq is clear-cut in this regard. However, the United States has opposed the return of the inspectors to Iraq.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to respond briefly to the statement made by the representative of Israel. The representative of Israel has tried, as usual, to divert the attention of

the Committee. He made a statement that had nothing to do with the maintenance of international peace and security. He alleged that Syria is waging a malicious campaign, but what Syria said yesterday was simply a statement of facts. Syria, like other Arab and Islamic countries, has called for the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region. It has called upon Israel to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to submit its nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

These are not propaganda campaigns. Our call is based on the premise that Syria in particular and Arab countries in general have chosen peace and aspire to peace in the region in order to spare it the scourge of total, unending war. Israel has been killing the peace process since the beginning, from Madrid to the Arab peace initiative that was adopted at the Beirut Summit in March of this year. Israel has killed the peace process with its tanks, its fighter jets and its heavy and light weaponry.

The heinous massacres committed by Israel are a case in point. If the representative of Israel wishes to speak about terrorism, then I would say that Israel is the only country in the region, or in the world, that practises systematic State terrorism against a people strenuously struggling for liberation, independence and self-determination. By this intervention, I wanted to make sure that other delegations do not fall for the distortions that Israel has tried to promote.

Mr. Itzchaki (Israel): I promise that I will not use the entire time granted to me for my second right of reply. I have listened very carefully to the right of reply by the Syrian representative, and I have to say that the audacity of the Syrian representative knows no bounds. Despite its protestations, the true nature of Syria's record is no secret. Syria has transferred small arms and light weapons and has provided other means of support to Hizbullah terrorists who continue to destabilize the northern part of Israel. Moreover, Syria, as I mentioned earlier, is one of only seven States listed as State sponsors of terrorism, as a consequence of the support and safe haven it provides to terrorist groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, the Palestine Islamic Jihad, Abu Moussa Fatah al-Intifadah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Hammas, one of the most deadly Palestinian terrorist organizations, which constantly opposes the peace process and has no limits on the means it uses, maintains offices in Damascus and enjoys basing privileges in Lebanon's Bekaa valley under Syrian control. Syrian contempt for the sanctity of human life does not begin at its borders. The regime has used the most brutal and murderous tactics to suppress dissent and silence political opposition at home.

A country with as shameful a record as Syria has no right to accuse others. I would have hoped that a country so completely at odds with the international campaign against terrorism would have hesitated to speak in this manner. The Syrian representative would be well served to heed the warning that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. Chung Eui-young (Republic of Korea): I should like to exercise my right of reply to the statement made by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in which he said the recent accident of two young females being killed by United States soldiers was linked to the Korean Government's dependence on foreign military strength.

Let me make three points: first, the stationing of United States forces in Korea accords with our mutual security treaty with the United States, which was signed because of the constant threat of military conflict on the Korean peninsula.

Secondly, the killing of two young girls by United States soldiers in Korea was an unfortunate accident that we believe has nothing to do with the security situation in Korea or with my Government's security policies. The incident is being fully investigated by the authorities of my Government and by the United States forces in Korea, and we believe that there will be appropriate compensation and punishment based upon the outcome of the investigation, in accordance with the status of forces agreement between my Government and the United States.

Thirdly, since the historic summit between the two leaders of the North and the South of the Korean peninsula we have been making impressive progress in inter-Korean relations, and we hope that this trend will eventually contribute to a lessening of the tension on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. Atieh (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I apologize for speaking once again. I reiterate that the representative of Israel was out of order when

he raised issues irrelevant to our work. Furthermore, I have to confess that I have not read or heard anywhere of a democratic occupation. Israel is an occupying Power. While it claims to be democratic, Israel destroys and kills Palestinians in the occupied Arab territories; it still occupies the Syrian Golan and has not yet completely withdrawn its forces from Lebanon.

What is truly astonishing is that this State, which claims to be democratic, denies the Palestinians the right to live within an internationally recognized and secure State. Israel should be the last State to talk about democracy.

In his first intervention, the representative of Israel noted that Syria was a member of the Security Council and had become the President of the Security Council. Syria has been known throughout its membership of the United Nations as having committed itself to resolutions of international legitimacy and to implementing United Nations resolutions. The representative of Israel has no right to evaluate Syria's work at the United Nations. We did not need Israel's vote to become a member of the Security Council.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): The representative of Israel referred to my country in his second statement. I should thus like to exercise my right of reply. The representative of Israel stated that his State was subjected to threats from its neighbours, as if trying to justify Israel's violations of the Assembly's resolutions, adopted on the recommendations of this Committee, that urge Israel to eliminate its nuclear weapons and its other weapons of mass destruction.

I should like once again to refer to the outcome of the Beirut Summit and to the Arab peace initiative. That initiative gives Israel, in exchange for a complete withdrawal from occupied Arab territories, the right to exist. It is not true, as the representative of Israel stated, that the Arabs threaten Israel. It is the occupying Power that poses a threat. In exchange for the right to exist, the Arab States are asking Israel to withdraw from the occupied territories. The Arab States have also assured Israel that they would establish normal relations with that country, something not found in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It is not true that the Arabs are today threatening Israel. Israel is the occupying Power that is threatening Arab States, or at least neighbouring Arab States.

In the same statement, the representative of Israel described Lebanese resistance as terrorism. The representative of Israel simply labels as terrorists those who resist in order to free their lands. In Israel's view, Charles de Gaulle, for example, would have been the terrorist *par excellence* because he fought to free his lands from occupation. There is a major difference between resistance and terrorism, as is affirmed by General Assembly resolutions. The representative of Israel should be the last person to make such accusations.

The meeting rose at noon.

United Nations A/C.1/57/PV.7

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

First Committee
7th meeting
Monday, 7 October 2002, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Kiwanuka ..... (Uganda)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda items 57, 58 and 60 to 73 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Smith (Australia): Mr. Chairman, may I express the Australian delegation's congratulations on your appointment to the chairmanship of the Committee. We look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

Few would disagree that the array of security challenges facing the world today highlights the need for strong international solidarity and resolve in dealing with threats. This forum is an important place to demonstrate our collective determination to strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation norms and arrangements. We have a responsibility to ensure that the First Committee remains a relevant and dynamic body in addressing current and emerging challenges to international peace and security.

Australia has been heartened by the strong international response to global terrorism after the tragic events of September 2001. The horror of those attacks infused last year's First Committee with a more cooperative spirit. For its part, Australia continues to play an active role in international efforts to eradicate terrorism, the disturbing breadth and depth of which is becoming clearer over time. We must all maintain a high level of vigilance and a strong determination to address this grave threat.

We must also remain resolute in our collective determination to strengthen multilateral mechanisms to meet the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We consider the continuing close engagement by Member States in multilateral processes to be of vital importance to promoting security objectives. Multilateral mechanisms raise the bar against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by establishing norms and facilitating verification of compliance and they complement plurilateral, regional and national non-proliferation efforts and arrangements.

We are all aware of Iraq's attempts over many years to circumvent international norms against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Australia considers that the international community cannot allow these violations to go unchecked and that firm action by the United Nations Security Council is required to rectify this situation. Getting inspectors back into Iraq, backed by a strong Security Council resolution providing for full and unfettered access to all sites, is just the first step. We must remember that our goal remains disarming Iraq of its weapons of mass destruction. Apart from addressing the threat to international security posed by Iraq, we must avoid creating a precedent that other would-be proliferators might be tempted to exploit.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons remains one of the most serious challenges to global security. The

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Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) serves as the cornerstone for global efforts seeking to curb the spread of such weapons and to work towards the goal of nuclear disarmament. Australia was particularly gratified by the recent announcement by Cuba that it would accede to the NPT, making an important step towards universalization. We take this opportunity to urge the three States that remain outside the Treaty to reconsider their position and to take steps towards NPT accession.

Australia welcomed the outcomes of the First Preparatory Committee meeting of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, which took place in April this year. While we see many challenges ahead in the 2005 review cycle, we take heart from positive developments. For example, the United States-Russian agreement on the Moscow Treaty is a tangible step towards the realization of NPT disarmament objectives.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a key element of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation framework. Australia is determined to continue to work actively to bring the Treaty into force. In this respect, I draw attention to the joint declaration that Australia, Japan and the Netherlands launched in New York last month in support of the CTBT. The declaration encouraged ongoing support for the development of the CTBT's verification machinery, adherence to the Treaty, and set out an action plan to expedite the entry into force of the Treaty. We encourage other United Nations Members to associate themselves with the declaration before it is submitted to the Secretary-General. With 166 signatories and 94 ratifiers, there should be no doubt that the CTBT represents widespread recognition of a powerful international norm against nuclear testing. In this regard, Australia is pleased that a voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing continues to hold. We strongly urge all nuclear-weapon and nuclear-weapon-capable States to continue to uphold that moratorium.

The universal implementation of the strengthened safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is another clear nuclear non-proliferation priority, and an area in which further headway can be made by the international community in the lead-up to the next NPT review conference. Achieving that objective would contribute significantly to a climate favourable to further cuts in nuclear arms. Australia is helping a number of regional countries with ratification and implementation of the Additional Protocols. Australia applauds the recent efforts made by the IAEA to counter the threat of nuclear terrorism through the work undertaken on the security and physical protection of nuclear material and facilities. Indeed, it was Australia's privilege over this past year to chair the Board of Governors of the IAEA and to be closely associated with these recent efforts. It is our firm view that, at this critical point in history, the momentum of the IAEA's work must be maintained to allow it to deliver continued security benefits to the entire international community. In particular, we make a plea that the Legal and Technical Group considering an amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, work constructively and expeditiously to achieve a consensus text which strengthens the Convention.

Australia invites all States to support fresh attempts to achieve a breakthrough on the commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). The negotiation of an FMCT is a priority disarmament and non-proliferation objective. It is disappointing that, despite repeated endorsement of proposals to negotiate an FMCT, after several years we are still no closer to the start of formal negotiations. We are encouraged that the Netherlands and other countries have undertaken informal discussions on FMCT issues. In the meantime, Australia and other cut-off treaty supporters call upon all relevant States to uphold moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes.

Australia is strongly committed to preventing the spread of chemical and biological weapons. We were disappointed that efforts last year to conclude a protocol to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) proved unsuccessful and that the Fifth BWC Review Conference subsequently failed to agree on a forward programme. In light of these setbacks, it is vital that momentum towards strengthening the BWC is renewed at the resumed Review Conference in November. Australia urges all States to increase their efforts to achieve practical and effective international measures promoting effective implementation of the BWC.

We are pleased that the difficulties that hampered the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been resolved and that the OPCW is pursuing its objectives with renewed vigour. We reiterate our earlier calls for all States that

have not signed and ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) to do so as soon as possible to ensure its enhanced effectiveness through universal membership.

Preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction is a key Australian priority. We welcome the Netherlands' invitation to host a conference from 25 to 26 November to adopt an international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. The code represents an important practical step in addressing the problem of ballistic missile proliferation and building confidence at regional and global levels. It does not preclude further initiatives in the future. We urge all States to sign the code.

Australia is proud to be associated with several initiatives in the conventional arms control field that have delivered tangible benefits to the international community. In the area of small arms and light weapons, Australia has been active in promoting implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action in our region. We urge all States to continue efforts towards implementing the Programme of Action in the lead-up to the first biennial meeting of States scheduled for mid-2003.

The Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines continues to grow in strength with a total of 130 countries having ratified or signed the Convention. Australia calls on those States which have yet to accede to do so as soon as possible, and to refrain from using anti-personnel mines in the interim. We welcome Thailand's plans to host the meeting of States Parties next September. That will assist in raising the profile of landmine issues in the Asia-Pacific.

Australia was pleased with the positive outcomes achieved at the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects last December. Work this year at the experts' level has demonstrated the adverse humanitarian consequences of explosive remnants of war and we feel confident that States will agree to raise the tempo of consideration of explosive remnants of war next year.

In a fluid global strategic environment, we take this opportunity to highlight the need for all First Committee delegations this year to cultivate a similar level of cooperation to that evident at last year's session. We should not let our inevitable differences of view allow us to lose sight of our shared commitment to the preservation and enhancement of international security. In this forum we must be guided by the overarching goal of mobilizing international support for practical measures that seek to address the existing, as well as emerging, threats to security. We therefore again stand ready to work closely and constructively with you, Mr. Chairman, and with all delegations over the coming weeks to help to ensure a successful session.

Mr. González (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, I should like to begin by congratulating you on your election to preside over the work of this important Committee. I wish you and the other members of the Bureau the greatest success and assure you that you can count on the cooperation and support of the delegation of the Dominican Republic. I should also like to express my country's support for the statement made on behalf of the Rio Group by the representative of Costa Rica.

The international panorama has been changing over these last decades. The premises on which security policies were developed have now been caught up in the desire to better manage the complex realities of the present. There is now a certain consensus that in many cases the major threats to the security of States do not come from military attacks against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of such States, but instead come from new and complex phenomena, such as drug trafficking, illicit weapons trafficking, terrorism and transnational crime by non-State actors. With regard to small island States, we could also add as threats to security, natural disasters, transport of nuclear waste and environmental degradation.

The problems of international peace and security are multiple and complex. Accordingly, we need a commitment from the international community as expressed in the United Nations that is more than merely something that is recorded each year. The Dominican Republic, as a country with a clear and expressed vocation for peace, supports efforts to achieve nuclear disarmament. In this context, my delegation wishes to express solidarity and, once again, its firm confidence in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We believe that the future of nuclear disarmament is

decisively linked to compliance with those two important commitments and international instruments. It is both timely and necessary to note the recent decision by Cuba to join the NPT and the eight further States that have decided to sign or ratify the CTBT.

Perverse and criminal terrorist acts as carried out on 11 September 2001 were and continue to be for my country's delegation a lamentable event against a vital human centre and an unjustifiable affront to a political and democratic system. We believe that those acts were indeed an affront to all those of us who share the same democratic principles, principles which we have worked so hard to achieve in some of our countries. That lamentable human tragedy should, however, encourage us to remain firm in the purposes and principles of preserving the moral values of democracy. We also need to ensure that our actions and responsibilities in the face of today's threats are in conformity with international law and the United Nations Charter.

The preservation of the Caribbean Sea is a subject which has, and continues to have, my country's priority attention. For far-off countries, the Caribbean may seem simply to be a seaway through which their big ships transport commodities from one ocean to another. For us the Caribbean Sea is our sea. It is our geopolitical space. It is fully and completely identified with our lives. Accordingly, for my country's delegation, the transport of radioactive waste through the Caribbean Sea constitutes a serious threat to security, to tourism, to marine life and to the environment of the whole region. Therefore, for my country's delegation, and in accordance with research by scientific and academic bodies, the existing design of transport vessels is inappropriate inasmuch as use is made of structurally weak materials. Moreover, emergency plans in the event of disasters are inadequate and insurance coverage in terms of liability is lacking.

Without doubt, all this constitutes a serious risk to Caribbean nations and to the other countries involved. Therefore, the Dominican Republic insists once again before the Committee that mechanisms should be applied to security measures and the transport of radioactive material and dangerous waste, as established by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). We also appeal for the adoption of new rules to complement internationally recognized safety standards, particularly with regard to such issues as safeguards against the contamination of the marine environment, the exchange of information on routes, and the establishment of mechanisms, and effective liability rules in case of damage.

Although more than three decades have elapsed since the conclusion of the negotiations on the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), we have over this period noted that the political and human phenomena that gave rise to the Treaty in our region were marked by the great capacity of our Governments to adapt to new developments. Amendments to the major articles, such as the Additional Protocols, are one example. This capacity to revise what has been negotiated, to make concessions and to update agreements in search of a common objective, has made it possible for the signing States to ratify the Treaty. We would also like to welcome Cuba as a State Party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Another subject that is of importance to my delegation is control over the trafficking and possession of small weapons. These types of weapons have caused, and continue to cause, serious problems in Latin America and the Caribbean. According to reports from regional bodies, the direct and indirect costs of damage in our region caused by the use of small weapons, is about $1.7 billion per year, and the worst damage, is the death of 1,000 persons a day in the region. The Government of the Dominican Republic is making major efforts to deal with this by establishing strict controls on our borders and at our customs posts, strengthening supervision at such locations, training personnel, educating the population on the danger and liability of bearing weapons, and, in particular, trying to improve the living conditions of our people. All this has a direct influence on our activities to combat crime. We should emphasize the recent satellite operations carried out by the armed forces in different strategic areas of the Dominican Republic where we have seized thousands of illegal weapons held by the civilian population.

We are also preparing to submit to our country's National Congress a proposed amendment to the national law on the bearing of arms, the fundamental objective of which will be to establish severe penalties for those involved in the illegal trafficking of weapons. We shall thus seek to ensure that the amendment is a

legal framework within which we will find further solutions to current forms of such crime.

The reality of current events has made it possible for us to observe that peace does not mean just the absence of war. It also means the interdependence and cooperation of all to promote economic and social development, to control and limit weapons, to promote human rights, to strengthen democratic institutions, to protect the environment, and to improve everyone's living conditions by a fairer sharing of the wealth endowed by nature. All these are indispensable elements in establishing democratic and peaceful societies, and, in particular, safer societies.

Mr. Niang (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): Mr. Chairman, may I say how happy we are to see you presiding over the First Committee. There is no doubt that your solid experience in the realm of disarmament and your distinguished diplomatic qualities will contribute greatly to the success of our work. Permit me also to extend our profound gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his exemplary devotion to the cause of disarmament.

One year after the distressing events of 11 September 2001, terrorism, the plague of our era, has emerged as one of the most serious threats to world peace. In this regard the international community did the right thing by adopting, in a spirit of unity and concert, bold measures against this terrible evil. It is a good thing that the Committee has provided the necessary momentum by deciding last year to adopt a resolution condemning terrorism while highlighting the dangerous link between it, illicit arms trafficking, and the movement of weapons of mass destruction.

Aware of the gravity of this problem, which has claimed so many victims in Africa — and I am thinking particularly of the dastardly attacks in Tanzania and Kenya — and taking due account of the new context emerging from the tragic events of 11 September 2001, Senegal which, on 17 October 2001, hosted an African conference against terrorism, last year proposed to the African Union an additional Protocol to the Organization of African Unity Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, adopted in 1999 in Algiers, the same city where an African plan of action against terrorism was recently concluded. That commitment of my country reflects our faith in multilateralism as the main road which will help us to make our voice heard more effectively in our struggle to eradicate the threats to international peace and security which flourish on the fertile soil of injustice, exclusion, poverty and underdevelopment.

That is why my delegation regrets the lack of meaningful progress in the realms of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation, at the very time when, thanks to the end of the East-West confrontation, the countries of the world should be taking every opportunity to build a world free from the spectre of collective annihilation.

It is too bad that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is far from having produced the effects provided for in the thirteen-point plan of action approved by the 2000 Review Conference. It is therefore urgent and imperative that the criteria for verification and irreversibility be strictly observed. Add to this the fact that the universality of the NPT must remain the highest priority. In this regard, I express my pleasure at the recent decision of Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. I should like to take this opportunity to call upon States that are not parties to this Treaty to join it as soon as possible.

In the absence of a reliable multilateral juridical regime in the realm of disarmament, bilateral agreements can contribute to the promotion of international security. My delegation therefore welcomes the agreement signed last May between the United States and the Russian Federation for a reduction of their strategic nuclear weapons. A great deal still remains to be done in order to banish this nuclear peril once and for all. That is why we must act quickly so that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) can enter into force as soon as possible. In this regard Senegal supports the initiative of 14 September last, launched by 18 States Parties to that Treaty, with a view to the signing or ratification of this instrument by countries that have not yet done so.

My delegation also feels that the happy initiative that led to the establishment in Central Asia of a nuclear-weapon-free zone should be followed in all parts of the world, following the Treaties of Rarotonga, Bangkok, Tlatelolco and of Pelindaba in Africa, dating from 1996. Furthermore, we should not overlook the challenge of the control of chemical and biological weapons. It is imperative, now that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has come into force, that

the organization dealing with the prohibition of these weapons should have the necessary resources to discharge its functions in verification and inspection. With regard to biological weapons, it is urgent that a protocol designed to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on that subject, should be concluded as soon as possible.

The promotion of international security cannot be boiled down merely to weapons of mass destruction, but should also apply to anti-personnel mines and small arms and light weapons, which sow death and destruction in so many developing countries, particularly in Africa. On anti-personnel mines, my delegation wishes to express its satisfaction at the results of the fourth meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, and also the concrete measures that have occurred on the ground.

On small arms and light weapons, my country continues to see them as a serious threat to the security of our peoples and the stability of States. In order to extirpate this evil the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) adopted a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Light Weapons in West Africa and has established national commissions to combat the proliferation of light weapons. As is recommended in both the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in July 2001, and the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons adopted in Bamako in 2000, only concerted and determined action by the international community can solve this burning problem. In the spirit of this concern, last year Mali, on behalf of the ECOWAS countries, submitted to the Committee a draft resolution entitled, "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them". This year again the draft resolution will be on the agenda of the Committee and will be submitted by Mali on behalf of the same organization. My country, the current Chairman of ECOWAS, would be grateful for the valuable support of Member States for this important draft resolution, submitted for the greatest good of the peoples of the West African subregion, and well beyond that, of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I have the honour to make this statement on behalf of the 14 member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are members of the United Nations.

There is no greater duty to be performed by the United Nations than the maintenance of international peace and security, and that gives particular importance to the work of the First Committee. The Charter establishes the framework for a system of collective security, based on the prohibition of the use of force, the peaceful settlement of disputes and for the functioning of multilateral institutions for enforcing these principles. The progressive reduction of armaments and the achievement of the goal of general and complete disarmament are of the utmost significance in realizing these objectives. We believe it is important that these general principles be reaffirmed as the foundation for our efforts. No matter what may be the challenges and the perceived realities of the moment, the promotion of disarmament must play a central role in United Nations efforts to promote peace and cooperation among States.

But to begin with, we should acknowledge the seriousness of the problems we face. In the international situation, new challenges have surfaced as a result of acts of international terrorism. The military responses, which have introduced new dimensions to perceptions of international security, naturally will have an impact on the disarmament agenda. That is combined with the persistence of conflicts, particularly in the Middle East, and of some regional rivalries and disputes that continue to raise the spectre of war. At the diplomatic level, progress is stalled by the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament which, regrettably, had nothing to report beyond the continuance of consultations over its programme of work.

All that is not encouraging, and in the current international situation, there is serious risk of losing ground in disarmament efforts within an atmosphere increasingly conducive to militarism. World military expenditures have been increasing since 1998, reversing the trend of reduction over the previous 10 years. For the year 2001, there was a significant increase that is expected to exceed the estimate provided by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) of $839 billion. SIPRI notes that important changes in the size and structure of the armaments industry have occurred since the early nineties, resulting from increased concentration and

internationalization of arms production; an increased level of privatization and commercialization; and an increased emphasis on exports to compensate for reduced domestic procurement. These are consistent with the overall trends in globalization which increases the danger of proliferation from the reduced transparency and accountability that make export controls more difficult.

These developments at the political, diplomatic and commercial levels justify feelings of concern and discouragement, but should not give rise to cynicism or undue pessimism. We should continue to pursue our disarmament efforts relentlessly and with perseverance. We should build on what has already been achieved by careful and systematic implementation of existing agreements. In the priority area of nuclear disarmament, renewed efforts should be made at the political level to bring into force the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). There is need for a new momentum, and greater public awareness should be aroused to bring pressure for moving this process forward, especially in relation to ratification by the nuclear Powers. Jamaica will be doing its part by hosting a regional seminar for Caribbean and Latin American States in December this year to help to promote universal adherence to the CTBT. These initiatives are important for the strengthening of an effective non-proliferation regime where already some progress has been made. But more needs to be done by the nuclear Powers who have clear responsibilities and obligations to fulfil under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) itself and in the implementation of the commitments agreed at the 2000 Review Conference. That would give greater assurance to non-nuclear-weapon States and would reduce security concerns about the possible use of nuclear weapons.

At this point, I take the opportunity to welcome the decision by the Government of Cuba to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. It is an important step that will promote regional solidarity in disarmament and is an act of faith in the international security system.

With regard to chemical and biological weapons, we should continue to develop and refine the verification arrangements that will promote even greater confidence in the effectiveness of these agreements.

It has been a little over one year since the convening of the important United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The urgency for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference continues to be emphasized by Caribbean member States. The provision of material and technical support for training and monitoring mechanisms to control the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons assumes greater importance every day. It is becoming increasingly clear that the interlinkage between the traffic in illicit arms and light weapons, the drug trade, terrorism and organized crime, poses serious challenges to social stability, security and economic development in the CARICOM subregion. We need an effective regime to control the supply of small arms to developing countries, and in particular to countries in situations of conflict. Of great concern is the inadequacy of existing regulation and the relative ease with which small arms can be bought and sold and enter the contraband trade. CARICOM, therefore, continues to support the establishment of a system of transfer controls in the jurisdiction of producer countries that would allow for registration and the marking and tracing of weapons sold.

The work undertaken by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, in conjunction with other relevant United Nations departments and agencies, in the implementation of the Programme of Action has been significant. We particularly welcome the intention expressed by the Department to establish a small arms advisory service to assist in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Special mention should also be made of the work undertaken by the Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has been active in its promotion of the implementation of the Programme of Action. It is hoped that the necessary resources will be found to continue its work.

CARICOM continues to call for the cessation of the trans-shipment of irradiated material through the Caribbean Sea. We continue to place emphasis on the conclusions and recommendations of the Sixth Review Conference of the NPT on this issue. At the same time, while recognizing the right of States to the peaceful uses of nuclear material, we believe that the time is now opportune for the international community to consider the establishment of a comprehensive regulatory framework to promote State responsibility

in areas dealing with disclosure, liability and compensation in the event of accidents during such trans-shipments.

Let me once again reiterate the importance of a coordinated response to the issues present on our agenda. There is need for a renewed commitment to negotiations and to an avoidance of political polarization which stymies progress. We owe it to succeeding generations to move forward actively towards the achievement of disarmament, development and the strengthening of international peace and security.

In relation to the machinery for carrying forward the disarmament agenda, there is need to review its functioning and to come with some more acceptable arrangements for disarmament negotiations. The current deadlock has to be broken, especially in relation to the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and on the issue of its enlargement. In addition, we should make greater use of the Disarmament Commission as a forum within the United Nations to deliberate on issues on the disarmament agenda. In light of all the current issues affecting disarmament, a review of progress and of existing institutional arrangements is needed. We therefore believe it is important that a decision be taken during this session of the General Assembly for the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and for the necessary preparatory arrangements to be made.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, allow me to convey to you the congratulations of the CARICOM delegations on your election to chair the Committee and to assure you of the full cooperation of our delegations with you and your Bureau as you carry out your responsibilities. Allow me also to express our appreciation to Mr. Dhanapala and the staff of the Department for Disarmament Affairs for their dedication, reflected in the high standard of their work, in the cause of disarmament.

Mr. Own (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset it gives me pleasure to express to you, Sir, on behalf of my delegation and my behalf, sincere congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. Our congratulations go also to the other members of the Bureau. We are fully confident that your experience and wisdom will enable us to achieve the desired results, which will have a great effect on the development of the disarmament process and the strengthening of international peace and security. We would also like to express our great appreciation and thanks to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala, for his statement to the Committee and for the efforts persistently made by his Department to fulfil its mandate. I cannot fail to join those who have preceded me in welcoming Switzerland and Timor-Leste to membership of the United Nations. We look forward to their effective participation in all its organs and agencies.

More than three decades have elapsed since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). During that period six review conferences have been held to review the results achieved in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and their reduction with a view to their total elimination and the establishment of a world free from nuclear weapons. Despite all this, the results achieved thus far are disappointing, indeed alarming. They portend catastrophes that will have grave consequences for all members of the international community. The number of States possessing nuclear weapons has increased. The number of nuclear warheads possessed by those countries is enough to destroy our planet thousands of times over. The destructive capability of these weapons has increased hundreds of times. Faced with this alarming fact, the international community, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, bear great responsibility to achieve the purposes and principles of the NPT. That can be achieved through demonstrating good will and entering into serious negotiations that aim irreversibly at the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements and instruments in the fields of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. They must honour all the commitments and undertakings made under the NPT and under the final declarations of the review conferences. That includes proceeding to conclude a multilateral agreement on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT, as well as a commitment to implement article VI in the manner detailed in subparagraph 12 of paragraph 15 of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. They must also commit to the implementation of paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East region.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to reaffirm the following: first, the need to continue the reduction of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons by collective, bilateral and unilateral initiatives, and considering such initiatives to be part and parcel of the nuclear disarmament process.

Secondly, the promotion of confidence-building and transparency by the nuclear-weapon States in order to limit the threats caused by these weapons, including the conclusion of measures to limit the battle readiness of nuclear-weapons systems.

Thirdly, the Conference on Disarmament must, without delay, establish an ad hoc committee to deal with nuclear disarmament. It must resume its negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral, effective and internationally-verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes. That treaty must take into account two objectives — nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Fourthly, the international community, in particular the five major Powers, must bring pressure to bear on the Israeli entity to accede to the NPT and to place all its military and civilian nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This is all the more urgent in view of the fact that it is the only country in a region suffering from the highest degree of tension that has not yet assumed such commitments. The nuclear weapons it possesses are a cause of alarm and a threat to the peace and security of the Middle East and to international peace and security.

The lack of political will by some States, particularly a certain major Power, has always been a major impediment to the achievement of any success or progress in the field of disarmament in all its aspects. The international community has not been able to maintain the momentum generated at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) during which the international community managed to adopt a consensus Final Document that continues to be a high point in the field of disarmament. The second and third such sessions failed to achieve the consensus necessary to adopt a final document comparable to the achievement of the first session. Indeed, we have failed to hold a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) despite persistent calls from the majority of the members of the international community.

The priorities of disarmament agreed upon by the international community in the Final Document of SSOD-I must not be forgotten. Indeed they must be strongly recalled. There is a need to consolidate and implement them because of their great importance in achieving arms control and disarmament. These priorities are nuclear weapons, followed by other weapons of mass destruction, biological and chemical weapons and, finally, conventional weapons. The Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) held in Geneva in 2001 failed to adopt a final declaration. The United States delegation proposed the termination of the work of the ad hoc group mandated to conclude a protocol to strengthen the Convention. That is all clear evidence of the lack of the requisite political will that we sorely need in order to make the necessary progress in all fields of disarmament.

My country has attached great importance to the question of disarmament. It has acceded to and signed many of the international agreements and treaties, such as the NPT, the BWC, the Geneva Protocol on Poisonous Gases, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the safeguards agreements with the IAEA. My country has effectively participated in the relevant meetings both internationally and regionally based on its deep conviction of the need to establish a world free from nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological weapons.

My country wishes to devote its efforts to eliminating poverty and endemic diseases, including AIDS. My country is committed to helping all peoples languishing under the yoke of colonialism and occupation in order to achieve self-determination, freedom and independence and put an end to suppression and injustice. My country is committed to the elimination of all kinds of terrorism, including State terrorism and organized terrorism, the dangers of which have not spared any part of the world, including my country, and most recently what happened in the United States last year.

My country is suffering from a number of problems resulting from an enormous number of landmines and remnants of war. The United Nations has estimated that there are no less than 10 million mines on Libyan territory planted during the Second World War. That has impeded socio-economic development in my country and has resulted in the maiming and killing of thousands of innocent civilians. Through you, Sir, we call upon all countries that have planted such mines to fully and promptly respond to calls from my country to provide us with mine-field maps and information, as well as technical and material assistance, and to pay reparations proportionate to the damage the mines have caused.

Here we wish to pay tribute to the historic Declaration concluded between Libya and Italy in 1998 which called, inter alia, for clearing mines from Libya and the signing by both countries of a Memorandum of Understanding in November 2001 for the implementation of the Declaration. From this forum we call on the other two countries, Britain and Germany, to follow Italy's example and sign similar agreements with Libya, to provide it with the necessary material and technical assistance for demining, and to pay the appropriate compensation to the Libyan people for the damages suffered.

This Committee has since 1981 been dealing with an item called "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region". My country has been calling for this region to be declared a region of peace and security so that all its peoples will be able to live in conditions of conciliation and mutual respect. We must all work for the Mediterranean to be a lake of peace and a meeting point of all cultures and civilizations. That can only be achieved through the complete withdrawal of all foreign military fleets and the closure of foreign military bases that no longer have a reason for existence, especially since the end of the cold war. Respect for the sovereignty of all countries of the region, non-interference in their internal affairs and settlement of all their disputes by peaceful means, through dialogue and without the use of force or the imposition of sanctions — these are all important requirements of the region. There is a need to put an end to foreign occupation and to ensure respect for the right of peoples to their self-determination and independence.

The Tripoli meeting of western Mediterranean States, known as the 5+5, held in May 2002, is an expression of the spirit of that cooperation and an important step in the right direction to achieve complete and comprehensive cooperation among the States of the region so as to contribute effectively to the strengthening of international peace and security in the Mediterranean basin.

Finally, I cannot fail to welcome Cuba's decision to accede to the NPT and ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That is an important step towards non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Chindawongse (Thailand): On behalf of the delegation of Thailand, I should like to join other speakers before me in congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that, under your able leadership and guidance, the First Committee will produce tangible results, thus contributing to disarmament efforts worldwide. I should also like to convey the appreciation of my delegation to Ambassador André Erdös of Hungary and other members of his Bureau for their contributions to the success of the First Committee last year. Thailand would also like to associate itself with the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) statement to be delivered subsequently by Myanmar.

The outrageous attack that led to the sad loss of the lives of thousands of innocent civilians on 11 September last year serves to remind us of the desperate and unimaginable measures that terrorists are willing to take to achieve their ends. We can never dismiss the possibility that weapons of mass destruction and related technologies could some day fall into the hands of international terrorists. That requires all of us to be even more vigilant.

It is therefore essential that we reinforce multilateralism and support multilateral regimes, particularly those in the disarmament field. For the challenge posed by international terrorism and its possible acquisition of weapons of mass destruction can only be met effectively through the concerted and coordinated action of all States large and small. Indeed, we should take up the Secretary-General's call in his recent address to the United Nations General Assembly to make full use of multilateral institutions. How best can we achieve that?

First, we need to continue to maintain, if not accelerate, the momentum in existing multilateral disarmament regimes. At the global level, the Treaty on

the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the bedrock for the total elimination and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The results of the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in 2005, held in April this year, should help to strengthen the momentum in the NPT process. We welcome Cuba's recent decision to accede to the NPT and to ratify the Treaty of Tlatelolco. The critical role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in helping to ensure nuclear safety and nuclear non-proliferation should be reinforced. In this connection, we are encouraged that at the recent meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors and the IAEA General Conference in Vienna, members of the international community attached high importance to measures to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear radiation, transport and waste safety, as well as nuclear verification and security of materials. It is therefore essential that developing countries have ready access to technical assistance, so that they may build their capacities to ensure greater nuclear safety in the development of research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. At the regional level, nuclear-weapon-free zones are an important instrument in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We thereby call on all States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to support the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. We also welcome the recent progress in the discussions for the establishment of a Central Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Secondly, we need to reverse the detrimental trends in some multilateral disarmament regimes brought about by both unilateral action and inaction. The failure of the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) last November to produce substantive results, has potentially placed the BWC regime in jeopardy. Despite the holding of the Conference on Measures to Facilitate the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) last November, the refusal by key annex 2 States, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to ratify the Treaty, has the potential to erode confidence in this important instrument for nuclear non-proliferation. We for our part are expediting our internal processes in order to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Thirdly, we need to support new initiatives to strengthen multilateral disarmament regimes. The launching of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-IV) which should, among other things, help to promote nuclear disarmament, is long overdue. We therefore hope that SSOD-IV will be convened as soon as possible with the participation of all States.

The threat of weapons of mass destruction looms over all of us, but we should not be complacent about small arms and light weapons either, for they are the real culprits, causing death and destruction every day. More and more people, including women and children, are being killed or maimed by small arms and light weapons as well as by landmines. It is these very weapons that could give our common enemies, the drug traffickers, the upper hand in our war against drugs. The international community took a significant step forward to address the challenge posed by the uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons with the adoption of the Programme of Action at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2001.

Thailand has taken many steps since then to follow up the results of the Conference. A national coordinating body, under the leadership of the National Security Council, has been established to examine ways to ensure effective implementation of the Programme of Action. Thailand also actively participates in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts, which met last July in Geneva, to assist the Secretary-General in undertaking a study to examine the feasibility of developing an international instrument to trace illicit small arms and light weapons. We support all efforts to ensure strong momentum in the follow-up to the Programme of Action, leading to the biennial meeting on small arms and light weapons next year. Regarding the venue and timing of that meeting, we strongly urge that it be held in New York in July in order to ensure that the greatest number of delegations are able to participate in the small arms and light weapons process. We also ask that Member States make good on their commitments to provide technical and financial assistance in order for all States to have the requisite capacity to implement effectively the Programme of Action.

The recent conclusion of the fourth meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) in Geneva brings into focus yet

again the devastating humanitarian impact of the landmines problem and the need to achieve universalization of the Convention as soon as possible. Thailand has played an active role in promoting the issue of victim assistance and in comprehensively addressing the landmines issue at the regional level through two seminars held in Thailand in November 2001 and May 2002. Our contribution to help address the global challenge posed by anti-personnel mines will culminate in Thailand's hosting of the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in September 2003. I therefore take this opportunity to invite all States Parties and other countries to attend and participate in this meeting.

Multilateralism and effective multilateral disarmament regimes are our best bet to overcome the challenges posed by international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and the threat of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Let us renew our commitments to multilateralism and jointly undertake efforts to make our world a safer and more secure place for future generations.

Mr. Sood (India): Let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and also assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation in the fulfilment of the responsibility entrusted to you.

Since we last met in the shadow of events that shaped the subsequent course of disarmament and international security approaches, we have seen a change in the emphasis of the work of this Committee. A greater sense of urgency has permeated our discourse, while in sharp contrast, we have become increasingly aware of the irony that the pace of our multilateral efforts has in fact suffered setbacks. The political will necessary to kick-start the negotiations of long-awaited and future-oriented disarmament treaties has not been in evidence for yet another year. If we do not get our act together we are in danger of engaging in activities full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.

We need to shake ourselves out of our stupor and take concrete initiatives that address both the issues that have remained with us for a long time and those that have emerged in the post-11 September 2001 context.

Let me begin with the grave threat that confronts and preoccupies all of us. When addressing the General Assembly last year, the United Nations Secretary-General said:

> "While the world was unable to prevent the 11 September attacks, there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction. The greatest danger arises from a non-State group, or even an individual, acquiring and using a nuclear, biological or chemical weapon. Such a weapon could be delivered without the need for any missile or any other sophisticated delivery system". (*A/56/PV.12*)

The United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has since dealt with the threat posed by terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and has made certain useful recommendations. Further steps need to be taken in the United Nations framework since this is not a problem specific to a particular country or region.

Given the global implications, it will not be sufficient to address the problem behind the closed doors of selective clubs. Hence, India proposes to introduce a new draft resolution to the Committee requesting the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the issues related to terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, with the assistance of a panel of governmental experts. Given the need for urgency, the draft resolution proposes that the study be completed during the first half of 2003 and submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session next year.

In my consultations with delegations, some concern has been raised about whether we have the provision of adequate funding. Given the manner in which the funding is programmed, namely on a biennial basis, quite clearly it was not possible for us to foresee the events of 11 September 2001 and therefore it was not possible for us to include such a study in the past. But given the urgency and the consensus that exists on the nature of the new threats we are facing, I am confident that we will be able to find the necessary resources in order to deal with this issue. Therefore, I hope that all members of the Committee will be in a position to support this timely initiative.

The issue of nuclear weapons pre-dates our concern with terrorism and goes beyond. The indivisible security to which we are all entitled will be possible only when we succeed in eliminating all

nuclear weapons from the arsenals of the world. Despite being compelled to exercise our nuclear option in order to preserve our strategic autonomy, India remains committed to the goal of global nuclear disarmament. My delegation is bringing before the Committee yet again, as it has done since 1982, the draft resolution calling for a convention to be negotiated for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

The failure of the existing non-proliferation regime can be attributed to its very discriminatory nature, which has been extended in perpetuity, thus compounding the problem. Until unequivocal undertakings given for the total elimination of nuclear arsenals are honoured, it will be necessary for all nuclear-weapon States to take steps to reassure the world that they will reduce the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons. There can be no justification for thousands of nuclear weapons to be maintained in a state of hair-trigger alert, with possible disastrous consequences. The call in the United Nations Millennium Declaration to seek to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction, including by convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers, can no longer be ignored. India's draft resolution, entitled "Reducing nuclear danger", will be presented to the Committee for the fifth consecutive year in the expectation that it will receive wider support and convince those who are still sceptical of the need for early concrete action.

As India prepares to assume its responsibilities as the President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), with effect from 1 January 2003, let me reiterate the commitment of my country to participate constructively and in good faith in the fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) negotiations in order to develop a non-discriminatory and verifiable treaty to prohibit the future production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices. India is also committed to preventing the further militarization and weaponization of outer space, which should be preserved for the full range of cooperative, peaceful and developmental activities. These commitments prompted India to support the compromise Amorim proposal as a possible way forward to commence substantive work in the CD. Since that proposal could not lead to a consensus among all members, we have welcomed the cross-group initiative of the five Ambassadors, and expressed our readiness to support it if it can lead us out of the long-prevailing stalemate at the Conference.

As President-designate of the CD, India, together with the outgoing President from Hungary, will engage in extensive consultations in the margins of this Committee in an attempt to untie the Gordian knot. Our attempt will not be to seek quick procedural solutions, but to ascertain whether there is preparedness by all concerned to display the necessary political will to find a substantive solution. The validity of multilateral disarmament negotiations in the sole forum designated for the purpose needs to be upheld. It should be possible for us to translate our lamentations about the current state of global security issues into a collective effort to breathe life into the CD so that it can be put to work for the collective good.

India participated actively in the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts, established to prepare a report on the issue of missiles in all its aspects, which completed its work this year. We have also followed with interest other initiatives aimed at dealing with the issue of missiles. We wish to see the norms against the proliferation of missiles strengthened through transparent, multilateral agreements on the basis of equal and undiminished security, which also ensure that civilian space-related applications are not adversely affected.

In recent years, in the name of non-proliferation, there has been an excessive reliance on export controls by select groups of countries. While such measures have not been fully effective, the denial of so-called dual-use technology and equipment has done immense damage to the peaceful developmental efforts of developing countries in a number of spheres of economic activity. There is a need for an effective and transparent system of export controls that would conform to the objectives of non-proliferation without affecting the peaceful applications of these technologies. There is no place for discriminatory mechanisms — some of which run contrary to existing treaty provisions — that deprive developing countries of the benefits of path-breaking scientific and technological developments. In order to address this critical issue, India will bring to the Committee, as it has done since 1989, a draft resolution entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

All of us have a stake in ensuring that all the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) are implemented fully and effectively. As an original State Party to this non-discriminatory treaty, India is fully committed to this task. We are also relieved that certain unhealthy developments that threatened the working of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have been resolved with the cooperation of all States Parties.

India is deeply concerned by the circumstances in which the Fifth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) had to be abruptly adjourned last year. Moreover, developments since then do not bode well for the resumed Review Conference this year. The anthrax incidents of last year, instead of prompting the world community to act collectively to challenge the threat of biological weapons, have instead led to a path that rejects the framework for multilateral action and may threaten the norm that has existed for 30 years. While national implementation measures and certain group efforts may be worth pursuing, they cannot substitute for meaningful multilateral efforts to strengthen the Convention. We hope that the resumed Review Conference can be saved from failure by reaching agreement, at least on modest follow-up work, in a truly multilateral context. At a time when the threat from biological weapons proliferation and bioterrorism is of great concern, it would be tragic to undermine the norm established by the BWC.

The Second Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons fortunately had greater success by expanding the scope of the Convention to cover non-international armed conflicts and by establishing a Group of Governmental Experts to address the issue of explosive remnants of war and mines other than anti-personnel mines. India has been an active participant in the process, having ratified all its Protocols, including the Amended Protocol on landmines.

As the designated Chair of the Meeting of States Parties later this year, we hope to be able to carry forward the current work in a realistic manner with the cooperation of all States Parties.

The work of the Panel on small arms and light weapons dealing with the issue of marking and record-keeping for the tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons has commenced its work this year. We appreciate the confidence shown in the election of India, by acclamation, as Chairman of the Panel and hope to successfully complete the task assigned to it with the cooperation of all members of the Panel.

India welcomes the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, on which we were represented. We note in particular the emphasis in the report for new thinking and the need for reinvigorated international efforts and cooperation in this field. There is an urgent need to strengthen the societal dimensions of disarmament, in which the academic, research and non-governmental organization communities can make a substantial contribution.

This year, we have all been preoccupied with dealing with terrorism that transcends borders. At the same time, we have witnessed a reluctance to urgently address long-term concerns that have remained with us. International law is based on the creation of global norms that sovereign States choose to observe. Collective acceptance creates legitimization, for there exists no global sovereign. History teaches us that unilateral actions, or those taken by exclusive alliances that do not meet the test of legitimacy, weaken the norms of international law. In dealing with problems of global reach and implication, we need to act collectively using non-discriminatory and transparent approaches in an inclusive manner. We need, through our action in this Committee, to re-establish the validity and effectiveness of multilateral efforts.

The Chairman: For the Committee to be able to complete its debate by 6 p.m. today, may I appeal to representatives to limit their statements to 10 minutes.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee. My delegation will find it a pleasure to cooperate with you for the success of our work. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

The United Nations Charter tells us of our commitment to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, of which weapons are the principal instrument. Weapons are intended primarily for the protection and survival of States. But today they have become a real threat to the States and the peoples of the world. It is therefore the duty of mankind to find the means to reduce their danger as much as possible. That is why the Committee has been tackling the problem of

disarmament and promoting security since 1978, which saw the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Our Committee continues these efforts today by examining the 18 items on its agenda at this session. We think it is possible to reduce the danger posed by weapons provided that States demonstrate genuine political will. That can be done through a series of measures promoted by the Committee which can be summed up as follows: first, we must continue efforts to educate people about disarmament in order to make people sensitive to and aware of the dangers of armaments. We must use the pressure of public opinion as an instrument to put pressure on Governments to make the necessary changes and to adopt policies that are conducive to disarmament. This exercise of public education has become easier and more rapid because of globalization and advanced technologies, especially the Internet.

We should not ignore the role that can be played by non-governmental organizations as well as the United Nations through colloquiums, seminars and conferences on this subject, and also by publications distributed to Member States.

Secondly, transparency in disarmament plays a very important role in reducing tension among countries and in promoting mutual trust. The United Nations has adopted fundamental measures in this area, such as the 1992 United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and also the request to Member States to provide the Secretary-General with information on their military expenditures. My Government is committed to providing an account of its military expenditures to the Secretariat. Those expenditures have gone down this year by 8.5 per cent over last year. My delegation believes that the role of the Register of Conventional Arms will be truly complete if it extends also to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, instead of being confined only to a group of seven conventional weapons.

Thirdly, the establishment of zones free of weapons of mass destruction is also a basis for disarmament. The establishment of such zones is usually conducted on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and on the basis of a national or international initiative. There should be more of these zones so that they cover more extensive demilitarized areas of the globe. On this basis the United Nations has proposed the establishment of zones free of nuclear weapons, one of them in the Middle East. However, this objective has remained a dead letter, in spite of 28 resolutions on this subject, the most recent being General Assembly resolution 56/21 of last year, calling on States of the region to refrain from manufacturing or acquiring nuclear weapons and to place all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) comprehensive safeguards.

In spite of the fact that it joined the consensus on this resolution, Israel has refused to implement it. In its reply to the Secretary-General in document A/57/214, Israel unambiguously declared: "General Assembly resolution 56/21 ... does not adequately reflect Israel's position vis-à-vis the nuclear issue in the Middle East".

So, it was as if the purpose of the General Assembly resolution were to reflect the will of Israel rather than for Israel to abide by the will of the General Assembly.

Fourthly, joining disarmament treaties and participating in international negotiations on the subject will strengthen international cooperation and create a favourable climate for the establishment of true partnerships. Based on that principle, my country and all States in the Middle East, except Israel, have become parties to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Israel, on the other hand, is turning a deaf ear to repeated international appeals calling on it to accede to that Treaty and to other instruments on the subject, and thus to ease tension in the Middle East. Its attitude also prevents the disarmament treaties from acquiring the necessary universality.

There is a close link between disarmament and development. In our world today, which has limited resources, money spent on arms has reached unimaginable levels, estimated at $850 billion to date. Such excessive spending constitutes a painful contradiction when we realize that one third of the planet's inhabitants are living poorly on less than $2 a day. Certain types of weapons, such as mines, are dangerous in more than one way. Apart from the vast sums that are squandered on them and the human loss they cause, they are inflicting irreversible damage to certain land areas, precisely the areas needed for industrial and agricultural purposes. That is true of southern Lebanon where, during its occupation, Israel left behind some 450,000 landmines, according to United Nations estimates.

In conclusion, it is our sincere hope that the Committee will be successful in its disarmament mission and in its efforts to promote peace and security. The survival of States will need to be strengthened by the principles of international law, not by military capabilities, so there will be no need for weapons. As Montesquieu said, "Empires built by weapons will have to be defended by weapons".

Mr. Issa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): First, I should like to express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau.

As we meet in the First Committee to consider issues related to disarmament and international security, our assessment of the limited progress made in these fields during the past year, as well as emerging trends, leaves no doubt that we are indeed witnessing difficult times, where positive developments have been overshadowed by serious challenges to multilateral disarmament mechanisms and to the future of multilateral efforts in these areas.

Here we welcome the positive proposal by Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, in his opening statement to the Committee, to establish an international commission on weapons of mass destruction. Today we are in dire need of dealing with the issue of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in a comprehensive and complete manner, and also of investigating other new and effective proposals that would break out of the traditional way of dealing with this topic, that is, "to think outside the box". We also need to provide serious, innovative recommendations that would contribute to promoting a dialogue on weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and missiles, in a balanced, methodological framework that would take into consideration the imperative needs of international peace and security as well as the requirements of legitimate security for States. Once again I should like to express our appreciation of the valuable contribution made by Mr. Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

I wish to talk about some positive elements. The delegation of Egypt welcomes the successful conclusion of negotiations between the United States and the Russian Federation, highlighted by the signature of the Treaty of Moscow, which launched a new security partnership and strategic dialogue between the two countries. It is our sincere hope that both countries will eventually apply the principle of irreversibility to nuclear weapons so they can be de-alerted or taken out of deployment over the next decade, thereby providing a true contribution towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament.

Egypt welcomes the endeavours of the five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region, which we hope will add impetus to the establishment of such zones in other areas of the world. We also welcome Cuba's decision to accede to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), thereby bringing us closer to realizing the universality of the Treaty. While Cuba's decision highlights the critical importance of the NPT as the cornerstone of both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, we regret that the common goal of achieving the universality of the Treaty remains elusive, both in South Asia and the Middle East, and that nuclear disarmament efforts continue to lack the necessary momentum.

With regard to nuclear disarmament, commitment was undertaken by all NPT States Parties in 2002 for achieving nuclear disarmament, and 13 steps were agreed upon to lead to that objective. The commitment by the five nuclear-weapon States to pursue the elimination of their nuclear arsenals is both moral and legal and, based on our understanding of that commitment, Egypt, with its partners in the New Agenda Coalition, will be presenting a draft resolution that, among other issues, addresses the laxity that has crept into global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts since May 2000.

It is with deep regret that we stand here at another session of the General Assembly while the Middle East has witnessed unprecedented and escalating violence. We see no progress towards achieving the universality of the NPT in the Middle East, an objective overwhelmingly supported by the wider body of the international community, whether in the context of the General Assembly or the NPT States Parties.

In fact the Middle East has witnessed more violence and escalation during the past year than any of us would have thought possible. The achievement of universal adherence to the NPT in the Middle East remains a priority for Egypt, as well as for the

overwhelming membership of the international community, and we will continue to pursue this issue in the General Assembly through a draft resolution calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, and another that calls upon Israel, the only State in the Middle East that has yet to accede to the NPT, to adhere to the Treaty.

In this context, we welcome the announcement by Iraq to allow the resumption of United Nations arms inspections on its soil, and its cooperation in these efforts is an essential step towards the lifting of sanctions that were imposed on Iraq more than a decade ago. We must also recall that those disarmament activities in Iraq were mandated by the United Nations Security Council in 1991 as steps towards the goal of establishing in the Middle East a zone free from weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Despite this fact, more than a decade has passed since the adoption of Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and no progress has been made towards achieving that essential objective. It is our firm belief that the credibility of the non-proliferation regime in the Middle East will depend to a significant extent on future action by the international community and by the Security Council towards realizing the wider objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation in the Middle East.

As I mentioned earlier, serious challenges exist to the multilateral disarmament infrastructure and to the future of multilateral efforts in arms control and non-proliferation. The updating of strategic doctrines in a manner that sets out new rationales for continued retention of nuclear weapons, their development and deployment, and even for their possible use, is certainly among the more serious challenges. But equally critical is the challenge to future multilateral action with regard to disarmament and international peace and security. The impasse in the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament is also a case in point, while there is recognition that the issues of nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and a fissile material cut-off treaty are all issues of concern to the membership of the Conference on Disarmament and to the broader international community. In spite of this, there has been no reciprocity, understanding or acceptance of the legitimate security concerns among other members of the Conference on Disarmament which, again, are only legitimate concerns. In our view, the crisis in the Conference on Disarmament transcends the tactical procedures and linkages between the elements of the programme of work and is symptomatic of a much deeper ailment in the state of international relations and of the role that multilateral action and institutions should play.

Another equally pertinent issue is that of missiles. Egypt commends the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts mandated with the preparation of a report of the issue in all its aspects, and endorses the outcome of its work. We are pleased that the group succeeded in producing a report on this complex issue and stress that, despite any misgivings concerning the brevity of the recommendations section of the report, it must be viewed as an initial step by the United Nations to address this particular issue in a multilateral way that will provide for more research and study and serve as a basis for further work by the Organization.

On the other hand, the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation has undergone several stages of development since its inception and circulation by States members of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in the year 2000. I must say that Egypt engaged in good faith in these efforts to consider the International Code of Conduct during two meetings held in Paris and Madrid in 2002. However, these efforts somehow always fell short of the necessary requirements of a multilateral exercise in the correct sense of the word. It is our view that the credibility and success of the International Code of Conduct or of any non-negotiated instrument or unilateral arrangement that would monitor exports, will depend largely on whether the final version drafted by the authors manages to address the issues pertinent to the debate on missiles in a balanced and objective manner. It should deal with all the different and equally important aspects of this case, so that the Code will succeed in attracting support from those States that possess ballistic missiles.

As for small arms and light weapons, it is important to recall the responsibility of States individually to implement the United Nations Programme of Action, which was approved in 2001, and work at the regional level if possible at all. That is particularly important as we approach the 2003 meeting to assess progress in implementation of the Programme of Action.

Finally, the delegation of Egypt wishes to draw attention to the continued commitment and support of the work of the United Nations in all fields of disarmament. We hope that the increased activities of the Organization in discussing the relationship between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction will continue in a way that will take into account stability within a legal framework dealing with weapons of mass destruction and within the ongoing development of the legal code at the United Nations that governs the question of terrorism. Consequently, it is important to proceed very cautiously and attentively in a way that will keep the required balance of the role of the international community within this particular question. Perhaps a first step to implement the recommendation of the Secretary-General should be to establish United Nations machinery to monitor international developments on weapons of mass destruction and terrorism, as one international source, and to provide a report on this to the General Assembly. This can be done while affirming the importance of securing the necessary financing for such machinery in a way that would maintain its viability and its active efforts. By making it an integral part of the machinery of the United Nations this machinery would be subject neither to external direction nor to other sources of financing.

Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the Venezuelan delegation I should like to reiterate our congratulations at seeing you preside over the work of the Committee. We also congratulate the other Bureau members. You can count on our cooperation in ensuring the success of this important Committee's work in the areas of disarmament and the preservation of international peace and security.

My delegation endorses the statement by the Costa Rican delegation, on behalf of the Rio Group. However, I should also like to express the position of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela with respect to the fundamental issues before the Committee.

At the Millennium Summit, heads of State or Government expressed support for general and complete disarmament to guarantee international peace and security in the world. I am pleased to state that in my country this is an objective that holds constitutional hierarchy in our basic charter. My country is unequivocally committed to disarmament. We have stated that at the Conference on Disarmament (CD), at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and in the work of this Committee, with a view to building a culture of international peace and security.

My delegation would like very warmly to congratulate the Government of Cuba on announcing its decision to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to ratify the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco. That represents one step further in our hemisphere because it confirms our objectives to maintain our region free of nuclear weapons. My country looks forward to the universality of the NPT, as agreed at the last Conference of States Parties. My delegation supports the formulation of a binding legal instrument, under which the nuclear Powers would make an unequivocal commitment not to use or threaten the use of nuclear weapons against those States that are not nuclear parties to the Treaty.

My country is pleased to see that agreements have been drawn up for nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world, because that contributes to strengthening the non-proliferation regime. We particularly welcome the conclusion of negotiations to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, like those that have already been established in other parts of the world. We also believe that it is necessary for States possessing nuclear weapons to conduct negotiations in good faith and to proceed, in accordance with the terms of article VI of the Treaty, to reduce their nuclear arsenals. My country is prepared to cooperate in order to ensure that the 2005 Review Conference will conclude successfully and that the agreements adopted at the 2000 Review Conference will be implemented.

My country, in May this year, ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We urge countries that have not yet done so to follow our example. With regard to the peaceful uses of outer space, we have supported the proposal by China and Russia to create a future international legal agreement on preventing the deployment of weapons in space, and on preventing the use or threat of use of force against objects in space.

My country notes with concern the indiscriminate use of biological and chemical weapons which

represent a danger to all mankind. We therefore support the strengthening of the two conventions on those weapons. We also believe that weapons of mass destruction are a danger to the international community. We are therefore pleased to see the conclusion of negotiations for the creation of an International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. My country has been taking part, at a very high level, in those negotiations and notes that the instrument will be adopted at an international conference at The Hague in November.

We are concerned by the growth of traffic in small arms and light weapons at the global level and the indiscriminate use of such weapons. These represent violations of rules established in the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

We call for transparency and reduction in military spending. My country's Government has, in various international forums, been calling for a reduction in defence spending by our States in order to invest in human capital — in education, housing, health, employment, protection of the environment and justice, because the failings that most of our countries face in these sectors are internal causes of conflicts which degenerate into international controversies. My country's Government put forward a proposal to the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, and has been doing so in other multilateral forums, to create an international humanitarian fund to alleviate poverty throughout the world.

We support the efforts being made by the international community to remove and eradicate anti-personnel mines, in accordance with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I am pleased to announce that my country has complied with article 7 of the Convention by submitting to the Disarmament Secretariat the duly completed questionnaire containing the information required under that important legal instrument. We are also contributing military personnel to remove mines in sister countries in one of our subregions, Central America.

In the Andean subregion, my country participated in the meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers of the Andean Community, held in Lima, Peru, in July this year. The meeting agreed on measures to promote subregional and Latin American peace, designed to ensure confidence-building.

To conclude, my country categorically condemned the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and condemns world terrorism and its causes. This is a very complex subject with diverse modalities. We believe that condemning terrorism must be accompanied by action to combat poverty, inequalities and injustices. It is the poor and the excluded who suffer most from this practice which knows no frontiers and leads to insecurity and the destabilization of world peace. Our objective must be to work for a safer more peaceful and prosperous world for all humanity.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Mr. Paclisanu (International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)): Since the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly we have witnessed important and positive developments in the context of two international humanitarian law treaties governing weapons. These developments illustrate the potential for making significant progress in addressing issues related to weapons when the focus is rightly put on the human implications of the weapons concerned, and on the fundamental and widely accepted norms of international humanitarian law.

The Second Review Conference of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), in December 2001, took the landmark decision to extend the scope of all the Convention's Protocols to apply also to non-international armed conflicts. That was a crucial affirmation of the international community's determination to ensure that fundamental rules prohibiting or governing the use of specific conventional weapons apply in the types of conflicts that are the most prevalent today. The extension of the Convention's scope sent a signal to both States and armed groups that the norms contained in the Convention must be respected in all armed conflicts. It will, incidentally, also make the ICRC's promotion efforts much easier.

States Parties to the CCW also agreed to begin formal efforts to address the global problem of explosive remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines in the framework of a group of governmental experts. In the course of the past two years the ICRC has drawn attention to the widespread and dramatic human

consequences of explosive remnants of war, which litter post-conflict landscapes throughout the world. In contexts as diverse as Poland and Laos, uncleared, unexploded ordnance have caused many thousands of casualties and require tens of thousands of millions of dollars to clear. As weapons systems capable of delivering huge quantities of explosive devices over great distances proliferate, so too will the human, social and financial costs, unless, that is, urgent action is taken.

The expert group's work has been encouraging so far. There appears to be a broad consensus that many problems relating to this issue are largely preventable and should be addressed in the CCW context. Many elements for a possible solution have been identified. Among many, these include obligations to clear, or assist in the clearance of unexploded ordnance and the provision of essential information to warn populations and facilitate safe and rapid clearance. However, it is unlikely that significant further progress will be made until specific proposals are considered within a negotiated framework.

Taken in the context of the adoption of the new Protocols in 1995 and 1996, the recent extension of scope, and the decision to begin work on explosive remnants of war and anti-vehicle mines, the CCW Convention has demonstrated its potential to be a dynamic instrument. It has been able to meet challenges arising from new weapons, changing environments, and the changing nature of warfare. The ICRC urges all CCW States Parties to accede, at the earliest possible date, to the extended scope of the CCW Convention and to any protocol to which they are not yet a party. Our institution also urges all non-parties to adhere to the Convention and join in efforts to address in this forum the global problem of explosive remnants of war. The ICRC considers that future work on explosive remnants of war should be carried out within a mandate for negotiation of a new legally binding protocol, and calls on all States Parties to support such a process at the special meeting of States Parties in December.

Last September's fourth meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction was another important landmark in efforts to end the scourge of these weapons. That meeting provided evidence of the effectiveness of the Convention in reducing the numbers of mines and in mobilizing States, international agencies and non-governmental organizations, towards the goal of the total elimination of anti-personnel mines, along with their horrific effects.

The adherence this year of seven more States, including Afghanistan and Angola, which are among those most ravaged by mines, demonstrates the continuing momentum towards the universalization of this Convention. It also reflected an important shift towards the achievement of specific objectives within fixed deadlines. As a matter of fact, for many States the deadlines for stockpile destruction are coming as early as 2003, and for mine clearance, 2009. The crucial role of the 2004 Review Conference to ensure that these deadlines are met and adequate resources are mobilized was recognized and preparation began. The ICRC looks forward to hosting in November a meeting in Moscow of States of the Commonwealth of Independent States to consider together the challenges and the promise of this important Convention. We call upon all States not yet parties to adhere as a matter of urgency.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), by prohibiting the production, stockpiling and transfer of biological weapons, provides an indispensable complement to the absolute prohibition of the use of such weapons contained in the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The ICRC, therefore, deeply regrets that lengthy negotiations to strengthen the Convention through a compliance-monitoring regime, were not concluded as expected in November 2001. We urge States Parties to spare no effort to ensure that the resumed Fifth Review Conference in November takes steps to ensure that the norms contained in the 1925 Protocol and in the 1972 Convention, are maintained and strengthened in the face of rapid scientific developments.

The ICRC is also concerned that the biotechnology revolution, which has already begun, could inadvertently facilitate the use of biological weapons. That has led the institution to issue a rare appeal to Governments, the scientific community and industry on biotechnology weapons and humanity.

The ICRC recognizes that potential benefits of advances in biological sciences and technologies are impressive. However, the potential for deviance is also profoundly disturbing. Existing biological agents have the potential to cause disease among large numbers of

people and to spread fear within populations. New agents and means to deliver them would make the use of biological weapons more dangerous, more difficult to detect, and therefore more attractive.

The capacity of science to manipulate existing bacteria, to create a virus from information on the Internet, and to make genetic material available by mail order, has recently been demonstrated. Unless adequately controlled, the hostile use of such scientific developments could undermine ancient and modern prohibitions of the use of poison as a method of warfare, with incalculable results. In the face of such risks for humanity, the ICRC appeal calls on Governments, the scientific community and the biotechnology industry to work together to ensure that biotechnology will never be put to hostile uses. The appeal proposes actions within the capacity of each of these groups to ensure that current international humanitarian law norms are reaffirmed and strengthened and that effective controls are placed on potentially dangerous knowledge and agents. It also calls on officials in science and industry to understand and assume their moral and legal responsibilities to prevent misuse. Specific proposed measures include the adoption of laws to ensure that acts prohibited by the 1925 Geneva Protocol and the Biological Weapons Convention are prosecuted; codes of conduct for scientists, medical professionals and industry; and improved international capacities to detect and respond to outbreaks of infectious disease.

Finally, the ICRC has urged States to adopt a declaration at a high political level on biological weapons and humanity, containing a renewed commitment to existing norms and specific commitments.

Last, but certainly not least, the ICRC continues to be preoccupied by the ease with which military-style arms are available in many regions of the world. Last year's Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects helped to draw attention to the enormous cost of the unregulated availability of such weapons. It was also important that the Conference acknowledged that this trade "undermines respect for international humanitarian law, impedes the provision of humanitarian assistance to victims of armed conflict and fuels crime and terrorism". (*A/CONF.192/15*)

The implementation of measures agreed upon is now of paramount importance. We urge States to review their laws and policies governing the transfer and availability of arms and ammunition, with a view to preventing access to arms to those who are likely to violate international humanitarian law. We also encourage continued efforts at national and regional levels to supplement the measures in the Programme of Action and look forward to a careful review of its implementation at the first biennial review meeting next July.

Mr. Moungara-Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Like previous speakers, I should like to take this opportunity to convey to you, Sir, the sincere congratulations of my delegation on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee. I also congratulate and thank the Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Dhanapala, for his statement made at the beginning of our session, which was full of important information. My delegation endorses the important statement made last week by the Ambassador of our sister Republic of Congo, His Excellency, Mr. Basile Ikouebe, on the action undertaken by the subregion of Central Africa in the realm of peace and security, dealing inter alia with confidence-building measures. Hence the importance for Africa of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and the need to provide sufficient resources for the activities of the Centre.

Pursuant to the Millennium Declaration, the leaders of the world have undertaken to apply the treaties concluded in realms such as arms control and disarmament. Our leaders, furthermore, in the area of international peace and security, supported the idea of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

Two years after the successful conclusion of the Review Conference, and in spite of the Millennium Summit vision on disarmament we are still very far from having achieved the goal of substantial disarmament. The deadlock, indeed the paralysis, in multilateral diplomacy on disarmament has given rise to serious doubts as to the prospects for a weapon-free era, and in particular, one free from weapons of mass destruction. Evidence for this is that the United Nations Disarmament Commission did not meet this year and

the Conference on Disarmament did not succeed in adopting a programme of work.

It is disturbing also to note that, in spite of public statements and declarations of intent by the nuclear Powers to strive for general and complete disarmament, military expenditures continue to climb steeply. This contradiction, unfortunately, eloquently reflects the lack of enthusiasm and zeal by those possessing weapons of mass destruction to get rid of their vast stockpiles which, in any case, are no longer justified by the current political-strategic situation. We must faithfully apply the juridical instruments concluded in disarmament, particularly the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which remains the pillar of the disarmament process. Similarly, we call for more countries to join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which was opened for signature on 24 September 1996. Furthermore, we appeal for the adoption by nuclear States of moratoriums on nuclear tests, moratoriums that should last until the entry into force of the CTBT.

Gabon, for its part, ratified this Treaty in September 2000 and has on its territory a seismological monitoring station as an auxiliary of the international system of the CTBT and will continue to cooperate with the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization, with a view to establishing a world regime governing verification of the Treaty.

The dastardly attacks on American territory on 11 September 2001 by terrorist cells recalls the urgent need for unanimous action against the dangers of the proliferation of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. At the same time, we must strengthen and improve the physical security of nuclear materials and bring about the destruction of stockpiles of biological and chemical weapons to prevent these materials from falling into the hands of desperados and outlaws willing to stop at nothing in order to achieve their sinister aims.

We do recognize, however, that some good things have happened in the general disarmament process. I should like to mention in this connection the conclusion in recent years of treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including the Treaty of Pelindaba for the region of Africa, and we invite all States of our continent to join it. The most recent nuclear-weapon-free zone is that declared in Central Asia, and we welcome it.

We also welcome the decision of Cuba to join the NPT and the signing or ratification of the CTBT by eight additional countries. The increase to 120 participants in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms also deserves mention.

With regard to small arms, the application of the actions contained in the Programme of Action adopted by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July 2001 should remain a priority. We note with satisfaction that the United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs is actively at work to establish an advisory service on small arms in order to help States to implement the Programme of Action. The countries of the Central African subregion, for their part, anticipated the 2001 Conference by deciding, following a subregional conference on small arms held in 1999 in N'djamena, Chad, on measures, including the creation of a standardized register of arms nationally and subregionally, and a data bank for existing stockpiles by country, by arms merchants and by transport agents; and the coordination of legislation of Central African States to combat the proliferation of small arms. The N'djamena conference also recommended the creation of a subregional office of Interpol in Central Africa. My delegation believes that combating the proliferation of small arms also requires consistent support for programmes on the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants. That is why we stress the need for financial and material assistance in this area to countries emerging from conflict in order to help them to consolidate peace in terms of security.

In conclusion, Gabon calls on the international community, particularly the nuclear Powers, to maintain the multilateral nature of the disarmament process. We must consider as an imperative necessity for international security, the task of maintaining the authority of the juridical system of disarmament and promoting the process of arms control and disarmament. As a universal political organization, the United Nations must maintain its leadership role in this area. We would also like to stress the need to conclude and strengthen international norms and instruments to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. With this in mind, an additional effort must be made to revitalize and reinvigorate multilateral diplomacy in the realm of disarmament.

The relationship between disarmament and development on the one hand and disarmament and the environment on the other, should be neither downplayed nor disregarded. At the end of our work here in a few weeks, we shall be voting on draft resolutions on almost the entire range of items on our agenda. Let us exhibit at that time our commitment to make real progress along the course laid down for us by the leaders of the world at the Millennium Summit. How can there be any credibility attached to any of our commitments if those relating to peace and security are the ones being disregarded. We also feel that the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of inter-State relations, and even national relations, based on respect and mutual tolerance, justice and equitable distribution of the fruits of expansion, are all solid guarantees of peace and security. If we are mindful of these values, it will help to ensure confidence and dispel the misunderstanding and hostility that underlie the arms race.

The Chairman: That concludes the list of speakers for this evening, but I now call on the representative of Iraq who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Al-Matoq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have been compelled to speak in response to the statement made by the representative of Australia and the false accusations contained in it against my country. I should like to place some facts before you, Sir, and the Committee.

First, Iraq has not contravened international norms or instruments. Iraq is committed to all international disarmament treaties and to the resolutions of the United Nations and the Security Council. The fact that the United Nations inspectors left Iraq was not by a decision from Iraq, nor by a resolution of the Security Council or the Secretary-General of the United Nations. It was a unilateral decision made by the Australian Richard Butler, the Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM). The decision was made in coordination with the United States and Britain in order to prepare for the attack against Iraq in December 1998.

Secondly, Iraq voluntarily and without a resolution from the Security Council, declared its unconditional acceptance of the return of the United Nations inspectors to Iraq, in order to prove to the world that there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Iraq negotiated with the United Nations in Vienna to put in place the final arrangements for the return of the inspectors to Iraq. However, the Americans oppose the return of the inspectors. They have also opposed the agreement reached with the United Nations in Vienna.

Thirdly, Iraq is not the one threatening international peace and security. Those that threaten international peace and security are the countries that are preparing for a war against Iraq and against the peoples and countries that oppose their aggressive policies. Why is the Zionist entity not branded as a threat to international peace and security in the Middle East? Israel's daily attacks on Arab States and the Palestinian people, and its possession of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons — do these not represent a threat to international peace and security? Is this not taking place with the support of its American allies?

Fourthly, it is indeed strange that some countries should make statements as if they were totally unaware of what was happening in the world around them now. They are like ostriches; they just bury their heads in the sand so as not to hear or see anything. How could it be that those countries do not know that Iraq has been attacked on a daily basis for more than an entire decade. Those acts of aggression are being committed by the United States and Britain, who daily destroy civilian installations, kill innocent civilians and destroy the economic and industrial infrastructure of Iraq, without any of those States uttering a word. Instead, we hear those who are in alliance with the Americans saying that Iraq is a threat to international peace and security. Can the victim be the accused? Can the aggressor be the innocent party, in the perspective of those countries, which falsely claims to be democratic and a defender of human rights? I address this next question to the representative of Australia. Does he have any evidence or proof to put before the Committee of the manner in which Iraq threatens international peace and security? Were the Australian naval forces not present in the Gulf besieging Iraq and monitoring everything that was going into and out of Iraq?

Finally, I apologize for speaking at such length but the international community must hear the truth about the conspiracy that is being hatched against my country and the plans to carry out an act of aggression against my country, with the participation of some parties, without any legitimate right to do so, and without any international law that would justify that.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.